

THE BUSINESS, TECHNOLOGY & ART OF ANIMATION

December
2006

ANIMATIONTM

MAGAZINE



**Toon Lovers'
Holiday
Gift Guide**

**Meet the Singin' & Dancin'
Show-Biz Birds of
Warner Bros.' Happy Feet**

**Cartoon Network's
Class of 3000
Hits the Right Notes**

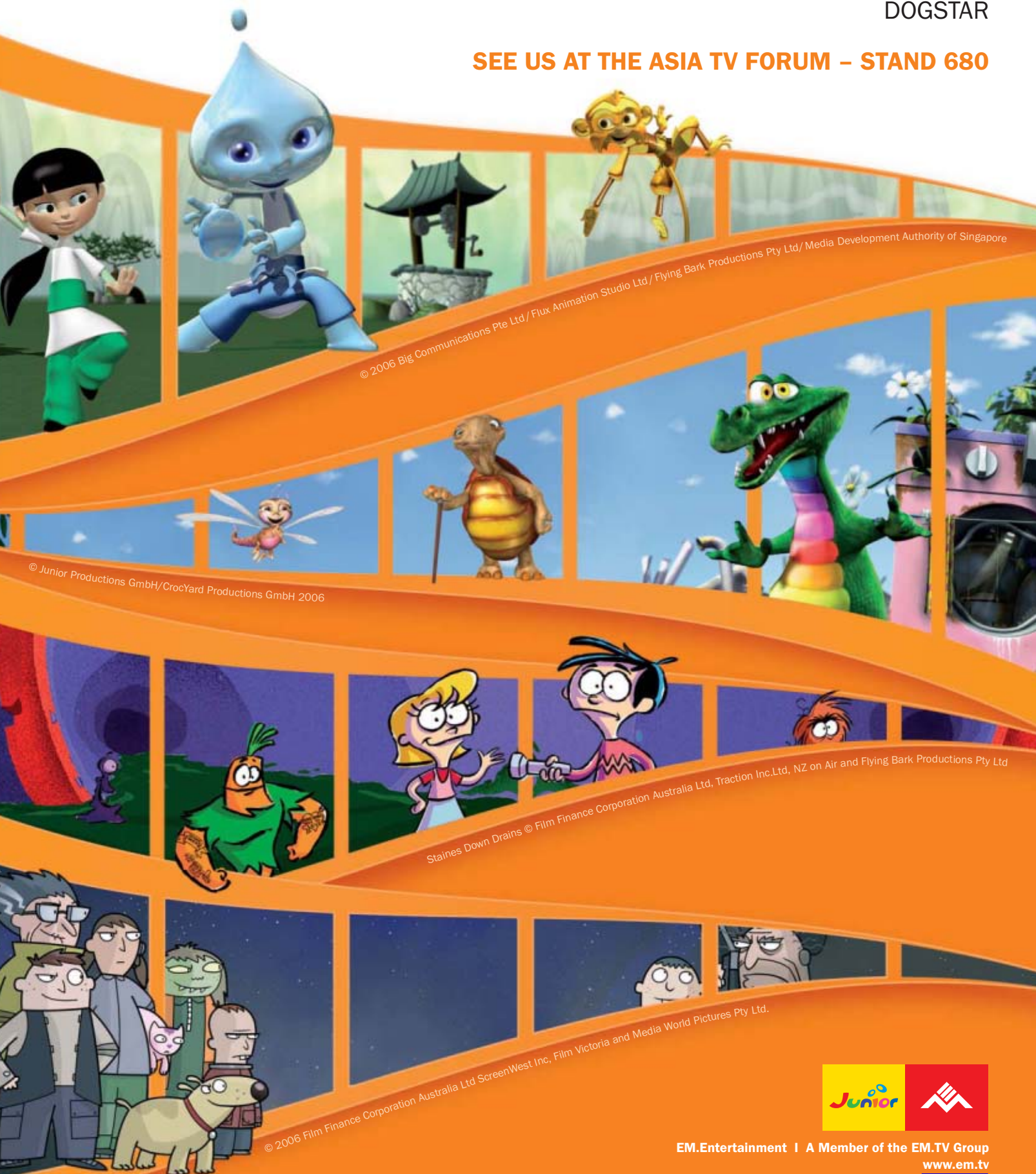
\$5.95 U.S. \$7.95 CAN



www.animationmagazine.net

IN PRODUCTION MASTER RAINDROP
CROCO LOCO
STAINES DOWN DRAINS
DOGSTAR

SEE US AT THE ASIA TV FORUM – STAND 680



© 2006 Big Communications Pte Ltd/ Flux Animation Studio Ltd/ Flying Bark Productions Pty Ltd/ Media Development Authority of Singapore

© Junior Productions GmbH/CrocYard Productions GmbH 2006

Staines Down Drains © Film Finance Corporation Australia Ltd, Traction Inc.Ltd, NZ on Air and Flying Bark Productions Pty Ltd

© 2006 Film Finance Corporation Australia Ltd ScreenWest Inc, Film Victoria and Media World Pictures Pty Ltd.



EM.Entertainment | A Member of the **EM.TV Group**
www.em.tv

ANIMATION MAGAZINE

Volume 20, Issue 12, Number 167, December 2006

CONTENTS



4 Frame-by-Frame

Monthly Animation Planner ... Uncle Walt's Cabinet of Animated Delights ... Close Encounters with Toon Players: Cartoon Network's Heather Kenyon.

8 Gaming

8 Snoopy Goes Flyboy. Namco Bandai Games and Smart Bomb Interactive take to the skies with *Snoopy vs. The Red Baron*. [by Ryan Ball] **9 More Cat-and-Mouse Games.** Warner Bros. Interactive's *Tom & Jerry Tales* is true to the spirit of the old classic toons. [by Ryan Ball]

10 Features

10 The March of the (Singin' and Dancin') Penguins. How the beloved birds of Antarctica came to digital life in George Miller's musical extravaganza *Happy Feet*. [by Michael Mallory]

14 Shorts

14 Look Back with Whimsy. How animator Obom's restless childhood and unique world view inspired her award-winning short *Here and There*. [by Ramin Zahed]

20 Home Entertainment

16 It's Wabbit Season, Again! For animation fans, Christmas comes earlier this year as Warner Bros. opens its vaults for the fourth volume of the popular *Looney Tunes Golden Collection*. [by Claire Webb] **18 More Mind Games from Japan.** Anime auteur Satoshi Kon plays with different perceptions of reality in his latest feature, *Paprika*. [by Patrick Drazen] **20 The Samurai Critic:** Reviews of the latest anime releases on DVD. [by Charles Solomon] **21 Christmas Collection.** Nothing like special-themed animated releases to put you in the right holiday spirit—even in November! [by Claire Webb]

22 Television

22 Class Act. Andre Benjamin and Thomas Lynch's colorful new Cartoon Network show, *Class of 3000*, energizes the new cable season. [by Ryan Ball] **26 MIPCOM Wrap.** A look at the recent TV market in France and its newsmakers. **29 The Padded Cel.** Our brilliant columnist sees signs of the holiday season in animation land. [by Robby London]



30 New Media

30 Beyond the Happy, Shiny Futurespeak. How to read between the lines and sift through the hype to find out the truth about the future of animated podcasts and web content. [by Chris Grove]

34 Licensing

34 The Animation Lovers' Holiday Gift Guide. We pick some of our favorite must-have DVD collections to terrific toy tie-ins, books, calendars and collectibles for the gift-giving season. [by Ramin Zahed]

38 VFX

38 On Her Majesty's Secret FX Mission. VFX supervisor Steve Begg spills the beans on the digital stunts of the new back-to-basics Bond thriller, *Casino Royale*. [by Ron Magid] **40 Tech Reviews.** [by Todd Sheridan Perry]

42 The Buzz on Flying Cars. Digital Domain and Animal Logic deliver two high-end TV spots featuring digital cars and flies! [by Barbara Robertson]

44 Opportunities

44 Canvassing the Big Animated Screen. A New England Institute of Art class teaches the essentials of cinematography to animators. [by Ellen Wolff] **46 Tips on Fine-Tooning Your Animation Job Hunt.** [by Rachelle Lewis] **48 3-D Pete.** What? Another CG-animated movie with smarty-pants animals? [by Mike Fisher]

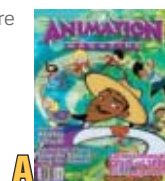


52 A Day in the Life. Bob Boyle, the creative genius behind *Yin Yang Yo!* and *Wow! Wow! Wubbzy!*, gives us a tour of his world.

On the Covers: A. Cartoon Network shakes it like a Polaroid picture with Andre Benjamin's musical toon series, *Class of 3000*.

B. The CG-animated penguins of George Miller's *Happy Feet* are ready to sing and dance their ways into moviegoers' hearts.

LILA and Asia TV Forum Cover: Cookie Jar Entertainment
AFM Cover: Classic Media





You've got to tip your hat to exec producer Al Jean and his sharp team of writers on Fox-TV's *The Simpsons*. Although some may believe that the long-running series is a mere shadow of its former self, the highly influential cartoon continues to poke fun at political and social issues often ignored by the cowardly mainstream press.

Almost 15 years after Matt Groening and company delivered the Christmas-themed first episode of the series, we find out that the *Simpsons* team has prepared a biting "Treehouse of Horror" episode which parodies the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq. And the timing couldn't be better—the show is scheduled to air the first week of November, right before the midterm congressional election.

Continuing their tradition of skewering all the sacred cows and politically

correct material around us, Matt Stone and Trey Parker are also making sure that *South Park* is in perfect fighting form on Comedy Central this year. Paired with the equally outrageous *Freak Show*, Stone and Parker took on powerhouse subjects such as Tom Cruise, Scientology, the prophet Mohammed and Terry Schiavo last season. And they show no signs of slowing down this fall with episodes dealing with 9/11, student-teacher romantic affairs and Satan's gay ex-lover!

"Part of living in the world today is you're going to have to be offended," Stone recently told abc.com. "The right to be offended and the right to offend is why we have a First Amendment. If no speech was offensive to anybody, then you wouldn't need to guarantee it."

It's obvious that when future social historians examine the pop culture of the early 21st century, they'll see that

these brave animated shows fought the good fight against phony wars, moral hypocrisy, crooked politicians and Right-wing witch hunts while major news organizations chose to look the other way.

Ramin

Ramin Zahed
Editor-in-Chief
rzahed@animationmagazine.net

Quote of the Month

"No no no, I'd love to make another film for New Line. And certainly *The Hobbit* isn't involved in the lawsuit. Bilbo Baggins doesn't work for the accounting department of New Line, and I certainly don't hold him to blame for any of our disputes."

—Peter Jackson in an *Entertainment Weekly* interview, when asked whether his lawsuit against New Line over *Lord of the Rings* profit issues would affect his decision to direct a movie based on *The Hobbit*.



ANIMATION MAGAZINE

December 2006

Vol. 20, Issue 12, No. 167

Info@animationmagazine.net

President Jean Thoren

Publisher Jodi Bluth

Accounting Jan Bayouth

Webmaster Eric Brandenburg

EDITORIAL Edit@animationmagazine.net

Editor-in-Chief Ramin Zahed

Web and Gaming Editor Ryan Ball

Contributing Editors Chris Grove, Ron Magid,
Barbara Robertson

Editorial Assistant Claire Webb

Copy Editor Roberta Street

Animation Art Advisor Ron Barbagallo

Digital Reviews Editor Todd Sheridan Perry

Contributors Patrick Drazen, Mike Fisher,
Jake Friedman, Evelyn Jacobson, Robby London,
Michael Mallory, Thomas J. McLean,
Mercedes Milligan, Christopher Panzner,
Charles Solomon, Ellen Wolff

ADVERTISING SALES

Sales@animationmagazine.net

Sheri Shelton

PRODUCTION Prod@animationmagazine.net

Art and Production Director Susanne Rector

CIRCULATION Circ@animationmagazine.net

Circulation Director Jan Bayouth

TO ADVERTISE:

Phone: 818-991-2884

Fax: 818-991-3773

Email: Sales@animationmagazine.net

Website: www.animationmagazine.net

List Rental

Quantum List Marketing

480-860-6036

ANIMATION MAGAZINE

(USPS 015-877/ISSN 1041-617X)

Published monthly by:

Animation Magazine

30941 West Agoura Road, Suite 102

Westlake Village, CA 91361

Periodicals postage paid at Thousand Oaks Post Office, CA,
and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER:

SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO:

ANIMATION MAGAZINE

30941 West Agoura Road, Suite 102

Westlake Village, CA 91361

TO SUBSCRIBE:

For the U.S., the rate is \$50 for 12 issues or \$85 for 24 issues. Rates for Canada and Mexico are US\$65 for 12 issues or US\$110 for 24 issues delivered by foreign airmail. Foreign rates are US\$80 for 12 issues or US\$136 for 24 issues delivered by foreign airmail. Please allow six to eight weeks for initial delivery. Also available in a digital version for \$36 for 12 issues or \$60 for 24 issues.

Animation Magazine

© 2006 Animation Magazine

Prior written approval must be obtained to duplicate any and all contents. The copyrights and trademarks of images featured herein are the property of their respective owners. Animation Magazine acknowledges the creators and copyright holders of the materials mentioned herein, and does not seek to infringe on those rights. Printed in the U.S.A.

JIM
BELUSHI

BOB
SAGET

DEVON
WERKHEISER

CASPER'S SCARE SCHOOL



Casper's Back
in his biggest adventure yet!
All New Series
Coming Fall 2007

Featuring all new songs from
CAPTAIN & TENNILE

Visit us! Loews
Hotel
Room 204

Douglas Schwalbe
Tel: 212-659-3011 Email: ds@classicmedia.tv
860 Broadway, 6th Floor, New York, NY 10003



ClassicMedia
www.classicmedia.tv

Layout & design © 2006 Classic Media, Inc. All characters, character names and related indicia are trademarks of their respective owners.

The Animation Planner December

1 It's time for some major heebie-jeebies in theaters as the new horror movie **Bug**, directed by William Friedkin, opens nationwide today.



Bug

4-10 Jet-setters may consider traveling to Bègles, France, where the international animation festival known as **Les Nuits Magiques** offers a rich collection of animated features and shorts (www.lesnuitsmagiques.fr).



5 Time to break the piggybank and take home a few animated DVDs—**Animaniacs Vol. 2**, **Pinky and the Brain Vol. 2**, **What's New Scooby-Doo? Vol. 10** and **Dungeons and Dragons: The Complete Series**, for example!



8 Mel Gibson's Mayan epic **Apocalypto** opens in select theaters today.



10 If you feel like getting some northern exposure, you may consider visiting the **Anchorage International Film Festival** this week (www.anchoragefilmfestival.com).

12 **Barnyard**, Steve Oedekerk's midsummer talkin'-and-dancin' farm animals movie hits the DVD stores today. Fans of 2D toons may opt for the Disney direct-to-DVD sequel, **The Fox and the Hound 2**.



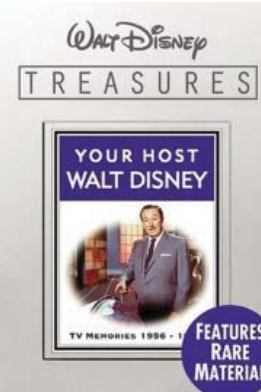
Barnyard

15 This holiday season, Peter Jackson fans will have to make do with Stefan Fangmeier's vfx-driven movie, **Eragon**, based on the dragon fantasy book by Christopher Paolini, opening in theaters today. Luc Besson's CG-animated **Arthur and the Invisibles** gets a limited release.



Arthur and the Invisibles

19 It's a great day for the Mouse fans. Among the new DVDs available in stores: **Walt Disney Treasures: The Complete Pluto, Vol. 2**; **More Silly Symphonies**; and **Your Host, Walt Disney**. Anime aficionados will gobble up **Paradise Kiss, Vol. 1** and **Lupin the 3rd: 6-10 Movie Pack**.



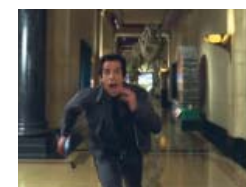
20 **Charlotte's Web**, E.B. White's timeless children's tale, becomes a full-fledged movie directed by Gary Winick.



SOME PIG

Charlotte's Web

22 Jurassic creatures come alive in the CG-driven movie **Night at the Museum**, starring funny man Ben Stiller.



25 Looking for a dark and disturbing movie about a future dystopia to counter all the holiday treacle? Then check out the new Alfonso Cuarón movie **Children of Man**, starring Clive Owen and Julianne Moore.



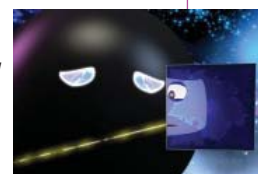
26 Official Oscar ballots are mailed today! The only new animated title up for grabs at DVD stores is **Saiyuki Reload Gunlock Vol. 5**, which is fine because you should be planning how many gallons of liquor you'll be consuming on New Year's Eve anyway.



Pan's Labyrinth

29 Guillermo del Toro's fantasy movie, **Pan's Labyrinth**, which has been getting raves at festivals all over the world, finally opens in theaters today.

31 Based on the book by Edwin Abbott, **Flatland: The Movie** is released on DVD today featuring the voice of Martin Sheen.



To get your company's events and products listed in this monthly calendar, please e-mail cwebb@animationmagazine.net



© 2006 Cookie Jar Entertainment. All rights reserved.
All trademarks, service marks and logos are the property of their respective owners, used with permission.

For The Kid Inside!



COOKIEJAREntertainment

Contact:

Julie NINOMIYA

VP of Asian Distribution & Co-Productions

Tel: 81.3.3415.8261

Olga ROMERO

Sales Executive

Tel: 323.937.6244

www.thecookiejarcompany.com

Uncle Walt's Cabinet of Artistic Delights

A stunning art exhibit in Paris offers a kaleidoscopic collection of drawings, studies, backgrounds and storyboards connected to the Disney classics as well as the art and music that inspired them. **by Christopher Panzner**

PARIS Diehard fans of the golden era of Disney animation may consider hopping a flight to Paris in the next few months. "Once Upon a Time, Walt Disney" ("Il était une fois Walt Disney"), an exhibition at the city of light's newly renovated Grand Palais, which will run through January 15, 2007, is an eyeful and a bonanza for anyone passionate about Disney's art and life.

The curator of the exhibit, Bruno

Girveau, was given unprecedented access to the studio archives by former Disney boss and art lover Michael Eisner. As a result, Girveau assembled hundreds of rare and unseen drawings, design sketches,

es, studies, cels, backgrounds and storyboard pages (as well as videos, models, books, toys, merchandise, posters, etc.)

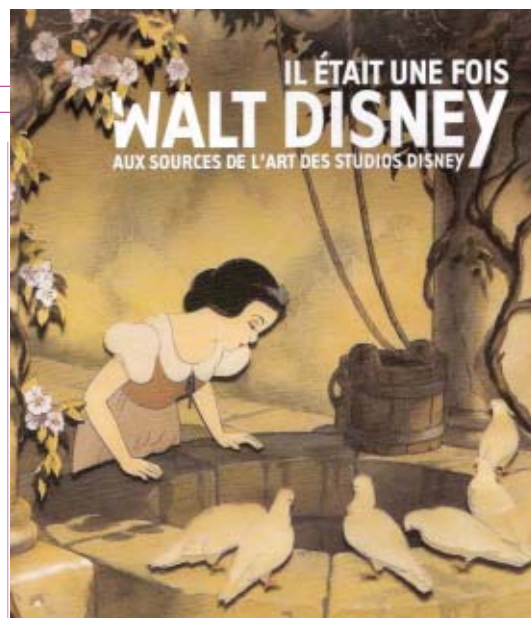
The exhibit underscores Disney's debt to European literature, art, music and cinema, loosely following the structure of the seminal book by Dr. Robin Allan, *Walt Disney and Europe: European Influences on the Animated Feature Films of Walt Disney*, and focusing on the sources of inspiration for the films Walt personally supervised: *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937), *Pinocchio* (1940), *Fantasia* (1940), *Dumbo* (1941), *Bambi* (1942), *Destino* (started in 1946 but released in 2003), *Cinderella* (1950), *Alice*

in Wonderland (1951), *Peter Pan* (1953), *Lady and the Tramp* (1955), *Sleeping Beauty* (1959), *101 Dalmatians* (1961) and *Jungle Book* (1967).

For a farm boy from Marceline, Missouri, Walter Elias Disney (1901-1966) had astonishingly cosmopolitan and refined tastes. His artistic influences, mostly illustration and painting, were largely 19th and 20th century French and German Romantics and Symbolists, English Pre-Raphaelites and Italian and Flemish primitives. Film influences were almost exclusively early German Expressionist cinema. Disney veterans David Samuel Hall, Bill Peet, Ken Anderson, Marc Fraser Davis, Vladimir "Bill" Peter Tytla, Eyvind Earle, Albert Hurter (Swiss), Gustaf Tenggren (Swedish), Kay Nielsen (Danish), Claude Coats, Joe Grant and Mary Blair are also cited at the very beginning of the exhibit as profound artistic influences on Walt, at the studio and on the above and future films.

Gustave Doré, Heinrich Kley, William Blake and Thomas Hart Benton are only a few of the numerous visual artists represented in the show. The exhibit's music scores are limited to the original *Fantasia*, already well-known (Bach, Tchaikovsky, Stravinsky, Beethoven, Ponchielli, Mussorgsky and Schubert), while literary inspirations include *Aesop's Fables*, *Grimms' Fairy Tales*, *Fables de la Fontaine*, Charles Perrault, Carlo Collodi, Lewis Carroll, James Matthew Barrie, Rudyard Kipling and Felix Salten.

The films featured include *Cabiria* (1914), *The Golem* (1915), *Homunculus* (1916), *The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari* (1920), *Nosferatu the Vampire* (1922), *Waxworks* (1924), *The Lost World* (1925), *Faust* (1926), *Metropolis* (1927), *Frankenstein* (1931), *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*



(1932), *King Kong* (1933), *Modern Times* (1936), *Romeo and Juliet* (1936), *Rebecca* (1940) and *Henry V* (1944).

Disney is arguably one of the greatest creative visionaries of the 20th century and certainly one of the most phenomenal products and producers of American popular culture. Which, as this remarkable exhibit reminds us, owes its origins and richness to many cultures internationally and whose influence internationally owes so much to Walt Disney. Although there are lots of thrills in the



Arthur Rackham's book illustration for *Alice in Wonderland*



show, among the highlights is the Oscar-nominated short film *Destino*, Disney's collaboration with Salvador Dali, and 22 stunning David Hall studies from 1939 for *Alice in Wonderland* (with later Mary Blair designs). The show is at the *Musée des Beaux-Arts* in Montreal, which co-sponsored the exhibit, from March 8 until June 24, 2007. ■

For more info, visit www.rmn.fr/disney/index1-3.html

Chris Panzner is a Paris-based writer and animation producer.

FRAME-BY-FRAME

Close Encounters with Toon Players

Heather Kenyon,
Director of Development,
Cartoon Network

Years in the Biz: I started as an intern in 1992 at Turner Feature Animation.

Hometown: Simi Valley, Calif.

Favorite animated show of 2006: I have to choose?

Things I look for in a show: Original, unusual, honest, fun, funny, genuine. And great drawings that make me laugh and nail the show in one little picture—or at least fall in love with the character.

What I'm sick of seeing: Superheroes with "wacky" powers, shows that are developed/created because the marketing numbers say it is a "hot" demographic, things that people think I want to see instead of what they want to do, and monkeys ... and aliens ... and carnivals (clowns are never funny)!

Favorite vacation spot: I am happiest when going places—anywhere!—I've never been before. But I went to Curaçao last year and it was awesome!

What I'm usually doing on a typical Sunday: Running errands, washing the car, doing various home improvement projects (that never get finished), watering plants, paying bills, etc.

Favorite hangout: Used to be Pierview in Malibu, but it was bought and shut down to become some crummy spa!!! Now, I am in search of a new hangout and haven't found one yet. I am open to any and all suggestions!

Biggest role model: Mother Jones, for raising hell at a time when women weren't supposed to and standing up against incredible odds for what was right.

The movie/book/TV show that changed my life: *Mary Poppins*. Those dancing penguins are such an amazing embodiment of joy.

Favorite rock band/performer: Who is currently playing on my iPod? It is probably a trance DJ ... would you count that as "rock"? If not, then Coldplay. But I really like the trance DJs!

Shows I always TiVo: I have TiVo but have yet to figure it out on a regular basis ... I usually push endless buttons and see what happens. *Lost*, any and all new animated shows and *Weeds*. Oh! And that *Nanny* show! Hi-larious!

Why I love my job: Come on! We have a great team that I get to work with each and every day. We spend half the day laughing and joking, while (hopefully) finding the next big thing for kids. Plus, my boss is Michael Ouweleen. I really think that something bad could happen to me at any minute, because no one should be this lucky.

Industry catch phrase I hope I'll never hear again: It is a tie between—"We aren't just pushing the envelope!! We are tearing it open!!! It's EXTREME!!!" or "mayhem/wackiness ensues."

Biggest myths about the animation business: That somehow computers do all the drawing these days.

What I thought I wanted to do when I was a little girl: It was all about being a long-haul trucker. I had it all worked out! That was my calling ... the open road and 16 wheels!

—Evelyn Jacobson

Squirrel Boy



Our
brand new development
studio
in **London...**
...be part of it



Storyboard Artists/Character Designers

There's now a brand new creative powerhouse opening right in the heart of Soho - Cartoon Network Europe's very own development studio.

This is a unique opportunity to be part of a small team responsible for developing the hit shows of the future. With the focus on storyboard-driven comedy animation series for Kids aged 6-11, your role will be to develop projects from initial pitches to series bibles, and ultimately storyboards and final animatics. These projects will then be put forward for series consideration.

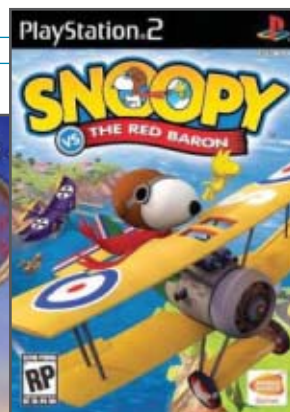
For you it offers the opportunity to pitch your own concepts and, if you're successful, we'll progress you to 'show creator'. An understanding of programming for our target age group is essential, as is a broad understanding of the U.K. and international animation industry.

If you have the skills and creative vision we're looking for and want to be part of this exciting new venture, please send examples of your work along with a summary of your career to date and salary expectations to Natalie Francis, International Recruitment, Time Warner, Time Warner House, 44 Great Marlborough Street, London W1F 7JL or email: Natalie.francis@timewarner.com

Closing date: 30 November 2006.



CARTOON NETWORK.



Snoopy Goes Flyboy

Namco Bandai Games and Smart Bomb Interactive take to the skies with *Snoopy vs. The Red Baron*. **by Ryan Ball**

In Charles M. Schulz's *Peanuts* comic strip and animated specials, Snoopy often climbs atop his doghouse, dons a pair of vintage aviator's goggles and imagines himself a WWI flying ace doing battle with the infamous Red Baron. Now fans can live out that fantasy as well with Namco Bandai Games' *Snoopy vs. The Red Baron* for PlayStation 2, PSP and PC. The game coincidentally arrives just in time to benefit from a little renewed interest in WWI aerial warfare generated by MGM's big-screen action pic, *Flyboys*.

Developed by Smart Bomb Interactive, *Snoopy Vs. The Red Baron* has players take on the role of the daring beagle as he barnstorms his way across six diverse environments in search of the Baron's secret hideout. Throughout the game, Snoopy's famous Sopwith Camel can be upgraded with such comical weapons as the player-guided Woodstock Missile, the Bee-Shooter and the Potato Cannon. The game also features cameo appearances by 12 *Peanuts* characters and offers more than 50 single-player and co-op missions.

According to lead animator Nathan Riddle, the team at Smart Bomb really strove to do right by *Peanuts* fans. "We were very cognizant of whose license we were working with and often asked ourselves, 'What would Charles Schulz want us to do?'," he recalls. "We constantly searched his comics to find iconic poses that we could incorporate into our animation to help give it that 'Peanuts feel.'"

In addition to spending hours and days poring over Schulz's comic strips to identify the most iconic images and poses, the Smart Bomb artists worked closely with Charles M. Schulz Creative Associates, the company founded by the late cartoonist to oversee the creative and business management of worldwide *Peanuts* licensing programs. "I received a lot of feedback from them that made the modeling process much more clear," says Riddle, who admits that bringing Snoopy and the gang into the gamespace still proved somewhat problematic.

Animator Jett Atwood notes that the 3D animation didn't allow them to get away with some of the things that might be

done in the 2D *Peanuts* universe. "For instance," he says, "in one of the specials, Snoopy stretches his arm all the way across the screen and out of frame to grab Woodstock. Because it's 2D, you buy it. If we had tried anything that extreme in 3D it would have

looked grotesque. At the same time, we didn't want to animate these characters like they were made of fine china. It was a delicate balance."

Importing the 2D characters into a 3D world presented other challenges, particularly the translation of drawing techniques. "Though believable on paper, Schulz's stylized process didn't work the same in 3D," Riddle notes. "In the comic strip, the *Peanuts* characters look very different in profile than they do face-on or in three-quarter view. Taking all of those differing looks and incorporating them into a believable 3D character that looked correct from any angle, yet stayed true to the original character design, was not easy."

The game's content and cinematics were created with Autodesk's Maya, using the standard Maya renderer. Adobe Photoshop was used for texture creation and compositing was completed with Adobe After Effects. From there, everything went into Bombshell, Smart Bomb's own proprietary game engine. The biggest challenge, according to Riddle, was creating more than 10 minutes of pre-rendered animation with a small team of animators and only six weeks to complete the cinematics.

While they wish they had more time to plus some of the animation, the Smart Bomb crew is very proud of the fun they were able to pack into the gameplay. "It's a beautiful game and it's really entertaining to play," Atwood boasts. "The most beautiful art and the most amazing cinematics mean nothing if the game isn't fun to play. Fortunately for us, *Snoopy vs. The Red Baron* is the whole package." Riddle adds, "The missions are fun to play and playing as Snoopy, the coolest dog on planet Earth, isn't bad either!" ■

Namco's *Snoopy vs. The Red Baron* game (available for PC, Xbox, PSP and PS2 platforms) is out in stores everywhere this month.



A Real Cat-and-Mouse Game!

The chase is on in Warner Bros. Interactive's *Tom & Jerry Tales*. **by Ryan Ball**

What's even better than having Tom & Jerry back on the air in all-new animated adventures? Being able to take part in all the madcap, slapstick fun, of course. Thanks to Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment and developer Sensory Sweep, fans of the classic cartoon and the new series, *Tom & Jerry Tales*, can now help Jerry escape Tom's clutches by arranging all kinds of calamities for the old cat. *Tom & Jerry Tales* is now available for the Nintendo DS and Game Boy Advance handheld systems.

Warner Bros. Interactive associate producer Nick Torchia tells us his crew and the folks at Sensory Sweep worked closely with Warner Bros. Animation, which supplied the game's artists and animators with episodes and concept art to help them capture the style and personality of the new series. The collaboration paid off since the game, especially the DS version, indeed looks and plays like an interactive cartoon. But rather than making a conventional platform

title, Sensory Sweep gave the game an interesting twist that was inspired by a Japanese football game made for the DS.

"With the DS touch screen and stylus, the team was able to come up with unique gameplay situations to essentially make the player complete the outcome," Torchia explains. "In the game, when Jerry is sawing the leg off the table, you are the one making him complete his actions with the stylus by running it in a back-and-forth motion. If you succeed, you are rewarded with the rest of cartoon. If you fail, Tom

becomes one step closer to catching you."

In addition to hacking up furniture, players can use the stylus to spin a turntable and manipulate other household objects in order to escape danger and put a hurtin' on poor Tom as Jerry aims to ultimately get him kicked out of the house. Bulldog Spike even shows up from



time to time to help out with the Tom bashing.

Since Tom and Jerry don't speak, the game's animators were challenged with providing all the laughs. "Sensory Sweep spent a good amount of time watching the old cartoons to really hone in on the humor aspect," says Torchia. "Most of the humor comes from their facial expressions and actions mixed with classic cartoon sounds."

Beyond the story mode there is a time trial, a jet pack-flying mission and a cheese-smashing mode. "The cheese smash is one of my personal favorites," notes Torchia. "You run through the level throwing chunks of cheese at household items and breaking them." There are also several mini-games and two skins to unlock, including a knight's suit of armor for Jerry.

Skewed to younger players, the Game Boy Advance version is a more traditional side scroller that offers more than 10 mini-games including a level where you have to work a line of toasters to launch toast at Tom as he tries to grab you. Cartoonish animation adds to the fun as Jerry's mouth opens really wide to eat cheese and other such touches play for laughs.

Tom & Jerry Tales for Nintendo DS and Game Boy Advance are published by Eidos Interactive and feature music from the *Tom & Jerry Tales* series, which recently debuted during the Kids WB! block on The CW. Exec produced by Joseph Barbera and Sander Schwartz, the new show is a return to basics with enough wild chases, slapstick gags and over-the-top mayhem to raise a knot on your noggin ... in a good way. ■

Released Oct. 31, 2006. For more info, go to www.wbie.com

GAMES



THE MARCH OF THE (SINGIN' AND DANCIN') PENGUINS

How the beloved birds of Antarctica came to digital life in George Miller's musical extravaganza *Happy Feet*.

by Michael Mallory

First things first: Yes, the driving force behind Warner Bros. and Village Roadshow Pictures' new CG-animated musical comedy/adventure *Happy Feet* is that George Miller, the Australian director who gave you the pulse-pounding *Mad Max* series. It is his first foray into full, all-out animation, having previously flirted with the medium for the *Babe* films of the 1990s.

So how exactly does one transition from trendsetting action films about apocalyptic road warriors to a digitally animated musical with singing and dancing penguins? It's easier than you might imagine. It all starts with the story.

In this case, Miller's desire to tell the story of the emperor penguins' quest for love after he saw a BBC documen-

tary titled *Life in the Freezer*. "I was blown away by what a fabulous story nature had written in an incredibly majestic landscape," says Miller, who co-wrote (with John Collee, Judy Morris and Warren Coleman), co-produced (with Doug Mitchell and Bill Miller) and directed *Happy Feet*. "I saw this incred-

ible sense of community in the way that they lived, and I thought it would be a wonderful allegory for how we bond together as humankind."

Four years in the making (with two of those devoted to setting up the digital pipeline) and costing a reported \$85 million, *Happy Feet* is probably easier to compare to a Gene Kelly MGM extravaganza of the late 1940s than any recent animated fare. For one thing, the animals of *Happy Feet* are rendered far more photorealistically, as is the icy, watery environment. In fact, early plans called for tracking the animated characters onto live-action plates of Antarctica, but that idea was jettisoned when the character animation came back looking so promising, according to Chris deFaria, executive vice president of digital animation and visual effects





Holiday on Ice: Animal Logic created a system that would take a gray-shaded character and translate the mo-cap data and project that onto it so that director George Miller could see what the real-life performers would look like as penguins. Animators used a base package of SoftimageXSI with proprietary modifications for character animation and rigging, muscle system and fat simulation. The facial acting in the film was all key framed.

for Warner Bros. "It became clear we were going to have a better shot at getting the look we wanted by doing virtual landscapes," he says. A team dispatched to Antarctica came back with 60,000 still images and 10,000 feet of film to use as reference.

Anchoring the story of *Happy Feet* is the true-life fact that emperor penguins attract mates through their individual songs. But when the film's young hero, Mumble (voiced by Elijah Wood), reveals he's



Chris deFaria



George Miller



Aidan Sarsfield

tone deaf; his parents, Memphis and Norma Jean (Hugh Jackman and Nicole Kidman); and his fledgling girlfriend, Gloria (Brittany Murphy), are dismayed. The fact that he can dance brilliantly is not accepted by penguin society and Mumble is ostracized, eventually falling in with a group of salsa-flavored penguins fronted by Ramón (Robin Williams, who also voices a second character in the film, a gonzo guru named Lovelace).



Director Miller knew from the beginning the penguins in the film had to be digital while the film itself had to be animated. For that he called on the Sydney-based digital house Animal Logic, which through *Happy Feet* is making its leap from effects house to feature production unit (though Rhythm & Hues and San Francisco's Giant Killer Robots also pitched in to complete the film's 860 or so shots).

And while penguins may sing in nature, they tend not to tap dance. So the filmmakers brought in Tony Award-winning dancer and choreographer Savion Glover (*Bring in 'Da Jam*, *Bring in 'Da Funk*) whose flashy footwork was mo-capped and translated to the character of Mumble. Even that wasn't as simple as it sounds since the director wanted to see the animated result in virtual real time.

"What Animal Logic was able to create was a system that could take a gray-shaded character and in a very short period of time translate the motion-cap-

ture data and project that onto it, and give George a sense of what the performer was going to look like as a small, round, fluffy penguin," says deFaria. Dubbed "A Giant Preview System," it managed to capture Glover's faster-than-the-eyesteps.

The visual element was augmented by sound recordings of the taps, made for comparison.

Not just Glover was mo-capped, though; all of the main penguin characters were, using dancers and movement specialists under the direction of choreographer Kelley Abbey. Again, it was not as simple as it sounds. "The real challenge was in animating the motion-capture data, what we call the motion edit," says deFaria. "That was a process of creating proxy animation derived from the motion capture in the neutral camera position, then lensing that—moving the virtual camera around it to accomplish the shot he's looking for—and then taking bits and pieces of certain takes and combining them. As a result he's getting these incredible performances because he's taking the highlights of very good takes and linking them together."

The animators used a base package of SoftimageXSI with proprietary modifications for character animation and rigging, muscle system and fat simula-



tion. The facial acting in the film was all key framed. "Because of the way we set up our characters it was a very easy process to add the facial animation, modify the performance, or both," notes Animal Logic's character supervisor Aidan Sarsfield.

For Miller, directing the acting part of the animation was an eye-opener. "I've learned a lot more about acting since doing animation," Miller says. "I've realized how important the eyes are in this film."

The team at Animal Logic (which numbered 500 at the project's peak), complied by instilling in the characters eyes more expressive human characteristics,

and Miller responded directorially by bringing the camera in closer to take advantage of it. "Initially, I didn't believe we could go into so many close-ups," he says. "I thought the penguins needed to be full sized to be anthropomorphic." Counter-balancing the close-ups are sweeping vista shots featuring vast crowds of penguins, created with Massive, the system that populated Middle-earth in *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy.

Now Miller says he has caught "the bug" for animation and plans to do more of it. "Everything seemed to be a challenge along the way, but you can do almost anything now," he says. "But when

you start off it's a leap of faith, you just don't know whether you're going to be able to pull it off. Somehow, I've always been drawn to those projects."

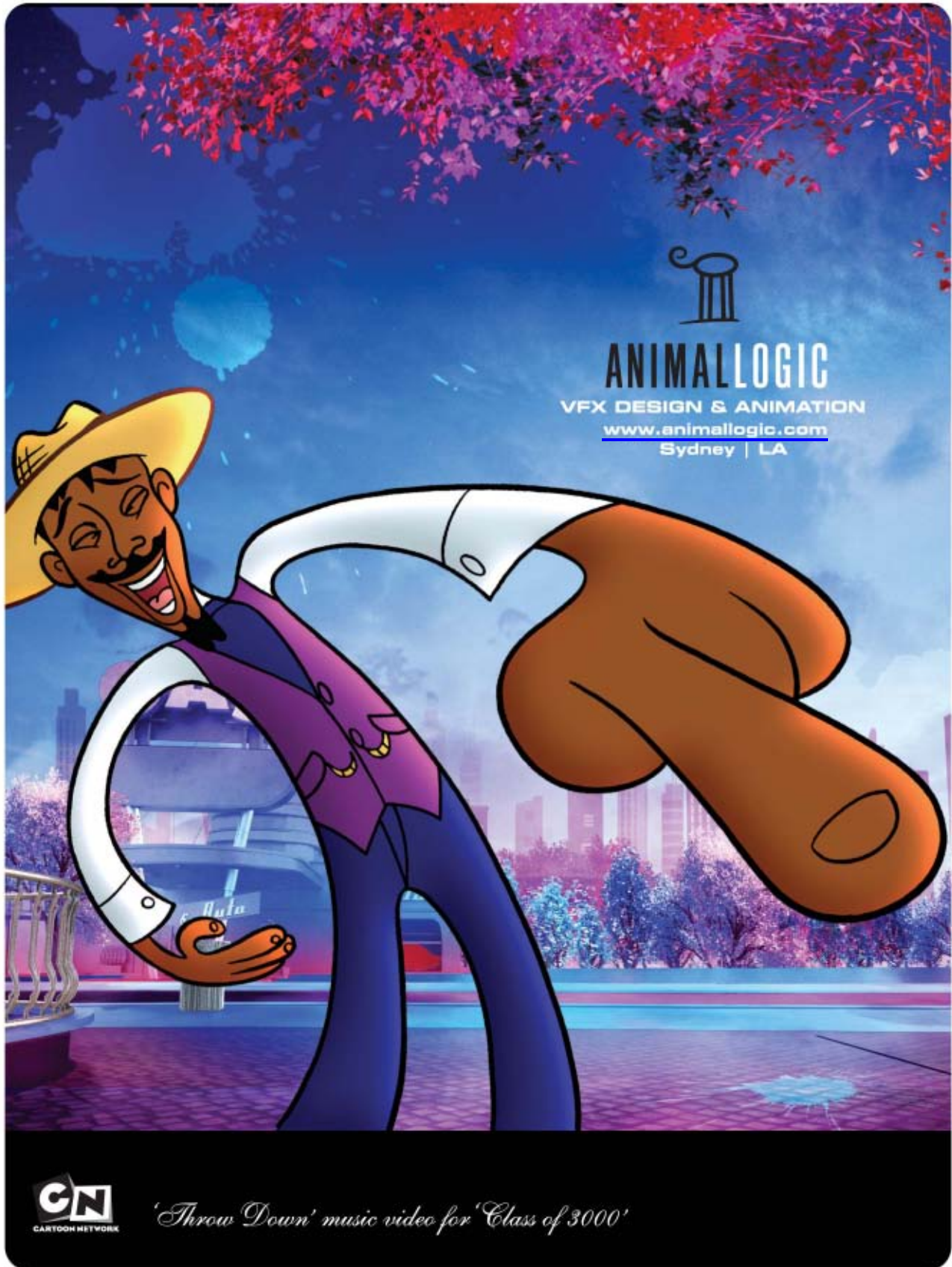
Why? With a laugh, Miller explains: "More than anything, I keep on thinking, 'I'm crazy!'" ■

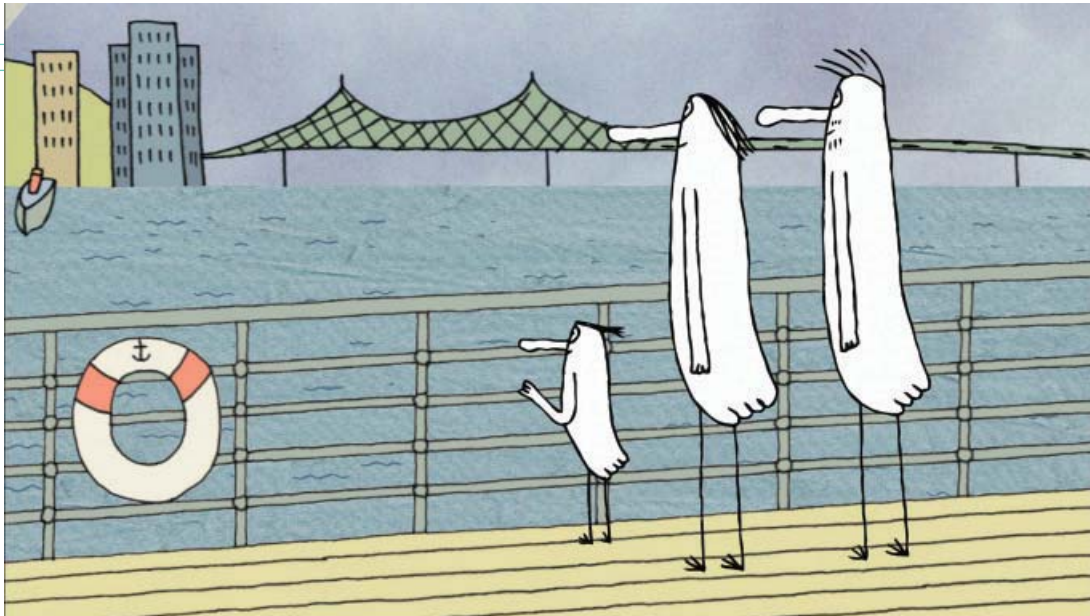
Michael Mallory is a Los Angeles-based writer who specializes in animation. His new book, *X-Men: The Characters and Their Universe* is available (Hugh Lauter Levin and Assoc., \$75) this holiday season.

Warner Bros.' *Happy Feet* will tap its way to theaters nationwide on November 17.

FEATURE







Diane Obomsawin

d'Australie (Letter from Australia) based on an interesting letter a friend sent to her.

After basking in the glow of fan support at Ottawa, Obom is

now working on two very diverse projects. One is a comic book based on the enigmatic life of Casper Hauser (A Dutchman who hid in a cave for almost two decades in the early 19th century) and a new animated short exploring various house archetypes (which takes her from animator Norman McLaren to igloos and the Three Little Pigs and The Big Bad Wolf).

Obom says researching her pet projects offers her a seemingly endless amount of pleasure. "I love to go the library and pick up books and be inspired by the stories and the images. The whole process of finding the information and learning things and using your imagination to interpret the world is thrilling to me."

She cites animated characters such as Droopy Dog and Pepé Le Pew as two of her favorite childhood inspirations. She also fondly recalls taking in many movies at the Cinematheque in Paris, which gave her both hope and distraction when she was saddened by the situations in her life. "I could always escape from my sorrows by drawing or by going to the one-dollar shows at the cinema. I would see these Russian films that were so beautiful. I didn't understand the language, but it was wonderful to see these amazing images on the big screen."

Most of all, the animator believes in the democratic power of art and animation. "I think everyone can and should draw," she notes. "You shouldn't compare yourself to others. Just be natural and rely on your instincts. Art really belongs to everybody." ■

For more info, visit www.onf.ca

Look Back with Whimsy

How animator Obom's restless childhood and unique world view inspired her award-winning short *Here and There*.

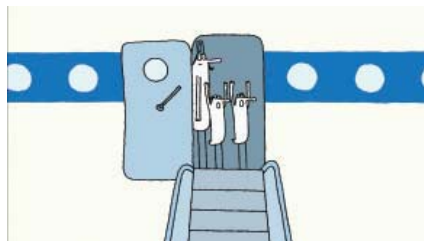
by Ramin Zahed

The messy effects of divorce on the lives of the children have been a popular staple of both dramas and autobiographies. However, it's certainly a cause for celebration when the theme is explored with honesty, gentle humor and an economy of words in a beautifully animated universe. A case in point is Diane Obomsawin's eight-minute short *Here and There* (*Ici Par Ici*) which drew raves from audiences at this year's Ottawa Festival of Animation and received the Best Narrative Short Independent Animation Award from the judges.

The poignant short was inspired by actual events in the Canadian-born artist's life, who spent her childhood in France and returned to Quebec in 1983. "It's completely autobiographical," she says during a phone interview from her home in Montreal. "I had jotted down fragments of my story just to remember where I came from. Then I drew a comic strip based on the writings and my producers saw the results and suggested that I create an animated piece. I don't know why but the comic-book version was a bit ruder in tone, and the animation made it a little softer and the characters are more endearing in the final film."

It took Obomsawin (she often uses the

shortened version of her name Obom, which means one who goes first in Indian) two and half years to finish *Here and There*, which was funded by the National Film Board of Canada. "The NFB is very reasonable and doesn't put too much pressure on the animators," she says. "I did all the drawings on paper first, then scanned them on computer. I used Photoshop and incorporated fabrics, textures, and pieces of wallpaper for the backgrounds. The rendering was done with Toon Boom's US Animation software."



Obom studied animation at Concorida University and was taught by Oscar-nominated animator Wendy Tilby. She worked as a graphic designer, painter and magazine illustrator, as well as completing several student projects and educational shorts. In 2000, her short *Understanding the Law: The Coat* was selected for the competition program at the Annecy festival. She based her next project *La Lettre*



WACOM

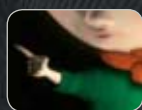
NEW! Wacom Cintiq® 21UX

Work directly on screen with the 21.3" interactive pen display. By using a pen directly on the screen, you work much more quickly and naturally.



Design Exploration

Explore more ideas in less time by using the full power of pressure-sensitive control with the pen on the screen.



Natural Workflow

Enjoy a completely digital workflow with the precision of your natural hand-eye coordination. Artists and designers work more quickly and naturally using the pen directly on screen.



NEW! ExpressKeys™

- Strategically placed programmable ExpressKeys™ for convenience
- ExpressKeys are "chordable" and can be used for modifier keys and keyboard shortcuts



NEW! Touch Strips

- Finger-sensitive Touch Strips for quick scrolling, zooming, brush size control, and more



NEW! Patented Grip Pen

- 1,024 levels of pressure-sensitive control
- Cushioned grip for ergonomic comfort
- Three nib styles for a variety of "feels"

Cintiq 21UX - \$2499 Visit www.CintiqAnimate.com Call 1.800.922.1493

©2006 Wacom Technology Corporation. Wacom and Cintiq are trademarks of Wacom Company Ltd. All rights reserved. All other trademarks are property of their respective owners. All prices are U.S. estimated street prices. ExpressKey is a registered trademark of Ginsan Industries, Inc. and is used with permission.

It's Wabbit Season, Once Again!

For animation fans, Christmas comes earlier this year as Warner Bros. opens its vaults for the fourth volume of the popular *Looney Toons Golden Collection*. **by Claire Webb**

"The rabbits are coming, hooray, hooray!" This famous Bugs Bunny quote pretty much wraps up how toon lovers will feel this month as Warner Bros. offers



a spanking new edition of the *Looney Toons Golden Collection*. The fourth volume in the series of-

fers 60 digitally re-mastered shorts, bonus commentaries, unedited sound clips and features. Each disc has its



own special theme, highlighting specific elements of the Looney Toons vault. This new re-

lease offers fans a variety of shorts that are sure to conjure memories of watching Bugs, Daffy, Elmer Fudd, Speedy Gonzales and company for the first time on television, as well as an inside look at the making of these toons from the directors, filmmakers and voice actors who were behind these historic shorts, produced from 1940 to 1960.



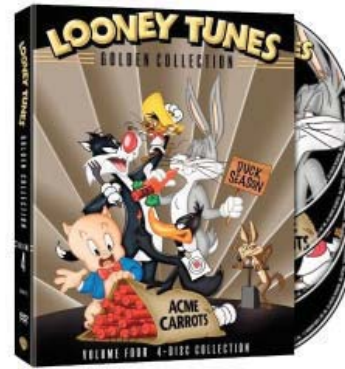
George Feltenstein, senior VP of

theatrical catalog marketing for Warner Home Video explains that the release of the first *Looney Toons Golden Collection* was a seven-year process because of the time and care put into the restoration, as well as figuring out which toons to include in each volume. He adds that this DVD is especially valuable because of its timeless appeal. "We [adults] watch these movies and laugh at them—like we did when we were kids—with our kids," he adds.

Each of the four DVDs contains 15 shorts that define the theme of the disc. Disc one, dubbed "Bugs Bunny Classics" provides some of the favorite shorts featuring the immortal hare. Disc two catalogs the work of animator Frank Tashlin with selections such as "The Case of the Stuttering Pig" and "Little Pancho Vanilla". Disc three showcases shorts starring Speedy Gonzales, while the final disc is devoted solely to the Looney cats.

Feltenstein comments specifically on his favorite disc in the collection, "I'm really happy there is a new disc dedicated to Frank Tashlin. He had a lot to do with the streamlining of Porky Pig. He brought a renewed sense of anarchy and energy." He also notes that all of the cartoons included in the collection have been restored from the original camera negatives, a process that can be quite costly. "The newly restored versions of these shorts also help represent the glory that the filmmakers intended," he adds.

In the tradition of the previous three volumes in the collection, the discs also brim with extensive special features. Larry Jackson's acclaimed 1976



documentary *Bugs Bunny Superstar*, which is narrated by Orson Welles and includes interviews with the likes of Friz Freleng, Tex Avery and Bob Clampett, makes its DVD

debut in this release. Another great feature is newly discovered Mel Blanc sound recordings of his famed voices like Porky Pig and Daffy Duck. As Feltenstein explains, the late master can be heard saying things like 'That wasn't good, let me try that again' during recording sessions. Audio commentaries and insights from Eric Goldberg, June Foray, Paul Dini, Jerry Beck and Daniel Goldmark also add to the viewing experience and understanding of the featured shorts.

Of course, some disgruntled fans may bemoan the choices made by Warner Bros. as to which toons to include in this release. But Feltenstein looks ahead to volume five and offers some comforting words. "Have patience, we will get to them all. We wanted to save the gems and spread them out evenly."

In conjunction with the *Golden Collection*, Warner is also offering a *Spotlight Collection* which contains only two discs and 28 shorts from the extensive list in the *Golden Collection* for a considerably reduced price. (The downside: you don't get the DVD devoted to Frank Tashlin.) Either way, we have a hard time believing there's anyone in the world who wouldn't want a copy of this timeless collection as a gift this holiday season. To quote Bugs again, "Of course, if you don't like rabbits, you don't like rabbits!" ■

Warner Home Video will release *Looney Toons Golden Collection Vol. 4* [\$64.92] and *Looney Toons Spotlight Collection Vol. 4* [\$26.99] on November 14. For more info, visit <http://whv.warnerbros.com/WHVPORTAL/Portal/homepage.jsp>

Don't be left out!

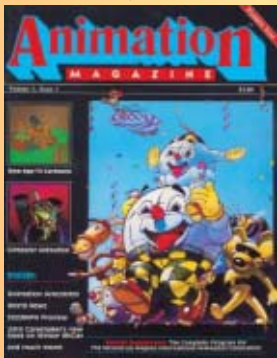
***Animation Magazine*, the only international publication covering the global animation and vfx industries, is celebrating 20 wonderful years in the biz!**

To kick off our 20-Year Anniversary celebration we invite you to participate in our January issue, the ANIMATION MAGAZINE ANNIVERSARY COLLECTOR'S EDITION.

- 1) If you are celebrating a **milestone anniversary** (5, 10, 15, 20, 25 years, etc.) in 2007, we want to know about it.

E-mail your info to cwebb@animationmagazine.net (by Nov. 8)

1986



- 2) We have rolled back our advertising prices to our **original 1986 rates!**

PLUS, you could possibly win **\$10,000** worth of advertising. Judges will choose the most creative ad.

- 3) Tell us in 50 words or less, why you **love** working in the **animation business**.

Please submit to cwebb@animationmagazine.net

2006



Material Deadline: November 15, 2006

We plan to double the printing count for this issue and distribute it throughout the coming year at events, trade shows and on our website through special promotions.



Japanese Mind Games

Anime auteur Satoshi Kon plays with different perceptions of reality in his latest feature, *Paprika*. **by Patrick Drazen**

Anime director Satoshi Kon loves to play games with audience perceptions. His acclaimed first movie, *Perfect Blue*, toyed with the mind of a pop idol whose career change upset some unstable fans. *Millennium Actress* mingled the memories and movies of an elderly movie star. The *Paranoia Agent* TV series was a near-symphony of varying perceptions, all swirling around a cute animated plushie and a serial killer.

Kon's latest film, *Paprika*, is a natural extension of his other movies, drawing directly on the world of dreams—more accurately, nightmares. *Paprika* had its premiere away from Japan, as a competitor for the Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival in September. The only animated film in competition in 2006, it sold out its showing in one hour and received a five-minute standing ovation by the audience.

The film went on to appear at a number of other international festivals even before its Japanese premiere. *Paprika* headlined the Korean International Film Festival was featured at the New York Film Festival, was shown at the Chicago International Film Festival, and will be at the Tokyo International Film Festival and the Leeds International Film Festival. Sony USA will also sponsor a limited theatrical release in America in 2007 before the Region 1 DVD arrives.

Kon, who co-wrote the screenplay with Seishi Minakami (Kon's collaborator on the *Paranoia Agent* TV series), based the movie on a 1993 novel by award-winning science-fiction author Yasutaka Tsutsui, who lists his

influences as "Darwin, Freud and the Marx Brothers" and, after *Paprika*, gave up on conventional writing to work in cyberspace. By coincidence, Tsutsui approached Kon about directing an anime version of *Paprika* after seeing *Millennium Actress*; Tsutsui then found out that Kon was a fan of his writing and had wanted to create an anime adaptation of *Paprika*.



Paprika centers on Dr. Atsuko Chiba, a cool, efficient, well-meaning female scientist, a character that may seem familiar to fans of Hollywood sci-fi films from the '50s. She works on the DC Mini, a piece of technology intended to literally get into a person's thoughts to restore troubled souls to mental health. However, it gives away nothing to say that a less than benevolent character gets hold of the DC Mini, and uses it to create dreams that lead to suicide or madness. And when enough people share the same dream, it becomes reality.

The film also follows a very different character named Tokita, a morbidly obese scientist and colleague of Dr. Chiba. He may seem

at first to recall the greedy hacker in *Jurassic Park*, but Tokita has humanity and compassion along with brains. (And when was the last time Hollywood gave us a really overweight hero?)

Kon told a press conference in Venice, "I put more emphasis on visual consistency, rather than story consistency." The visuals by Kon's longtime animation studio Madhouse are spectacular. Kon exploits the

dreamscape and inner fantasy world of the characters, blurring the lines between fantasy and reality to full effect. In the three years since Kon's *Tokyo Godfathers*, animation technology has evolved at a rapid pace, especially in the blending of 2D and 3D graphics, and the visual richness of *Paprika* reflects this. Plus, as in Kon's masterwork *Millennium Actress*, this movie is packed with allusions to other movies and literary sources, from *The Big Sleep* to *Tarzan* to *Alice in Wonderland*. The music is by another veteran of Kon's films, Susumu Hirasawa, who scored *Millennium Actress* and *Paranoia Agent*.

The Japanese voice cast features Megumi Hayashibara as Dr. Chiba and her alter ego Paprika, the vivacious redhead that the buttoned-up doctor wishes she could be in public. For two decades Hayashibara has been a successful pop singer and one of the best-known anime voice actors, with such major roles as Rei Ayanami in *Neon Genesis Evangelion*, Lina Inverse in *Slayers*, Faye Valentine in *Cowboy Bebop*, and especially as another fiery redhead: Ranma Saotome's female half Ran-chan in *Ranma 1/2*. She's cut back on her anime work since becoming a wife and mother a few years ago; this is one of her rare recent roles. Kon also makes his acting debut with a cameo voice in *Paprika*.

Incidentally, the anime world was well represented at Venice this year. Although *Paprika* was the only animation in contention for the Golden Lion, Studio Ghibli brought Goro Miyazaki's directorial debut film *Gedo Senki* (*Tales of Earthsea*). And the creator of *Akira* and *Steamboy*, Katsuhiro Ôtomo, screened his live-action film based on Yuki Urushibara's supernatural/mystery manga series, *Mushishi*. ■

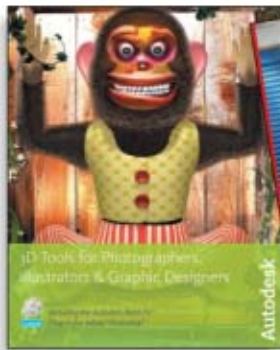
For more info, www.sonypictures.com/homevideo/paprika

Oh me oh Maya!

Jump-start your Maya skills with these latest official guides.



1-897177-33-X • \$69.99



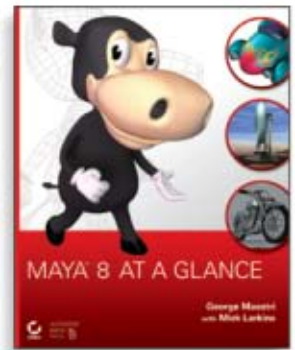
1-897177-05-4 • \$59.99



0-471-79404-X • \$49.99



0-470-05135-3 • \$34.99



0-470-05657-6 • \$29.99

Available at www.sybex.com and wherever books are sold. Sybex is the official publisher of Autodesk Maya Press titles.



Wiley, the Wiley logo, and the Sybex logo are registered trademarks of John Wiley & Sons, Inc. and/or its affiliates. Autodesk and Maya are registered trademarks of Autodesk, Inc.

With hundreds of thousands
working in the animation industry worldwide,
how do you make your company stand out?
How many deals or contacts can you make
in only five minutes?

**The answers are simple,
but it is all up to you!!!**



Take a moment to include your information in our professional reference guide,
The Animation Magazine Industry Directory,
and be among the thousands of animation-related companies and schools
from around the world included in this database.

**After publishing the Directory for over 15 years,
we are happy to announce this valuable tool is now available online!**

www.animationmagazine.net/amid

Don't forget to complete your FREE basic directory listing today.

The Samurai Critic:

Reviews of the latest anime releases on DVD



Illustration by Pres Romanillos

by Charles Solomon

*Zankoku na tenshi no youni
Shounen yo shinwa ni nare
Like an angel without a sense of mercy
Rise young boy to the heavens as a legend*

—*The Thesis of a Cruel Angel*,
(Theme song of *Neon Genesis Evangelion*)

Ten years ago, Hideaki Anno brought an end to *Neon Genesis Evangelion* (1995), the landmark series that blended giant robot battles, teen-age angst, apocalyptic Christian symbols and vaguely Jungian psychology into an intriguing and disturbing saga that remains greater than the sum of its parts.



Neon Genesis Evangelion

The series takes place in 2015, fifteen years after the Second Impact, a titanic explosion in Antarctica that laid waste to much of the Earth. Although it was reported as a meteor strike, the cataclysm was actually the result of the first encounter between humans and the mysterious “Angels.” Anno never explains the origins of the Angels, but these exceedingly powerful beings have begun attacking Earth. The only thing capable of fighting them are the Evangelions or Eva’s—gigantic cyborg robot-suits piloted by psychic teen-agers.

The brilliant, ruthless Gendo Ikari oversaw the creation of the Eves, a project that is somehow linked to a scheme to redirect human evolution. One of the born Eva pilots is Gendo’s 14-year-old son, Shinji. In contrast to the posturing warriors in many anime series, Shinji is repressed and alienated. Like a minor player in a tragedy, he’s caught in a web of plots and terrors he doesn’t comprehend. His victories over the attacking Angels bring him neither happiness nor pride, and his fragile psyche eventually collapses under the strain.

The final episodes of *Evangelion* that suggest Shinji’s descent into schizophrenia sat-

isfied no one, including Anno. He wrote that he had created the series after four years of severe depression and that “the story has not yet ended in my mind. I don’t know what will become of Shinji or Misato, or where they will go.” Anno reworked material from the last episodes into a theatrical feature *Death and Rebirth* (1997) that also proved inconclusive. The second film, *End of Evangelion* (1997), brought the saga to a violent end that ultimately seemed to mean whatever viewers wanted it to.

The broadcast series and the features sparked intense discussions that continue more than ten years later: There are over 800 web sites in 12 languages devoted to *Evangelion*. Fans attempt to analyze what they see as a profound work of modern mythology; skeptics dismiss the *Evangelion* continuity as obscure and pretentious.



Neon Genesis Evangelion: Death and Rebirth

Anno followed *Evangelion* not with another intense fantasy epic, but with an adaptation of Masami Tsuda’s warm high school romance *His and Her Circumstances*.

Soichiro Arima and Yukino Miyazawa appear to be model freshmen: Smart, athletic, good-looking and well liked, they serve as class representatives and organize extra-curricular events. But they’re both coping with what they regard as dark secrets. An almost psychotic need for recognition impels Yukino to work day and night to maintain her seemingly effortless academic excellence. Soichiro was abandoned as a child by his abusive parents and adopted by his uncle and aunt: He’s determined to rise above his biological parents’ shameful reputation and prove himself worthy of his adoptive parents’ love.

In each other, Yukino and Soichiro discover someone to whom they can reveal the vulnerable individual behind the mask. Yukino helps Arima keep the demons of his unhappy childhood at bay; his gentle reassurance

frees her of the need to prove her superiority over her classmates. When they begin to explore the sexual side of their relationship, Anno presents their actions simply and tastefully, without preaching.

Much of the charm of *His and Her Circumstances* comes from well-observed moments that capture the doubts, misunderstandings, self-dramatization and bewilderment of teen-age romances. The animation is often minimal, but Anno skillfully uses a wide array of visual styles to suggest the ever-shifting uncertainties of adolescent relationships. Some scenes look like manga pages; others feature split screen effects and reversed colors. When a paper cut-out of Yukino gets angry, she literally goes up in flames; sequential photos of an animator depict an obnoxious classmate.

When this warmly funny series concludes, Anno deconstructs each character’s world, then reconstructs it with greater clarity, suggesting that the love between Arima and Yukino will continue, even as the circumstances surrounding them change.

After sitting through yet another CG feature about two wisecracking animals who end up establishing a “family” with their wisecracking sidekicks—which seems to be the only plot available to American animators these days—*Evangelion* and *His and Her Circumstances* provide welcome reminders of the medium’s limitless potential. ■

His and Her Circumstances:
TV Series Collection
[Right Stuff: \$59.99, five discs]
Neon Genesis Evangelion:
Death and Rebirth/
End of Evangelion Two-Pack
[Manga: \$39.98, two discs]
Neon Genesis Evangelion:
Platinum Collection
[ADV: \$89.98, six discs]

Christmas Collection

Nothing like special-themed animated releases to put you in the right holiday spirit—even in November!

by Claire Webb

The Snowman [Sony, \$9.95]

Twenty-four years after its original air-date on U.K.'s Channel Four, this charming hand-drawn animated special based on Raymond Briggs' popular book hasn't lost any of its freshness nor timeless appeal. Directed by Dianne Jackson and produced by toon veteran John Coates, the 26-minute short gets a new DVD release this season. The story, as many will recall, centers on the bitter-

sweet friendship between a young boy and a snowman, which comes to life and takes the boy to visit Santa in the North Pole. The re-release features narration by pop icon David Bowie and a new version of the song "Walking on Air" by Aled Jones (originally sung by Peter Auty), accompanying the whimsical sequence in which the pair fly through a night sky. *The Snowman* is re-vamped and ready for the holidays! [Release date: Oct. 24]

Cartoon Network Christmas- Volume 3 [Turner Home Ent., \$14.98]

Right after you finish watching *Cartoon Network Halloween Vol. 3*, be sure to pick up this collection to make the transition into December. *Cartoon Network Christmas Volume 3* is a handful of episodes from some of the network's most beloved series. The disc includes *Camp Lazlo* "Snow Beans" which makes its debut on DVD as the Bean Scouts accompany Lazlo on a ski trip.

Also included is "Billy and Mandy Save Christmas", an episode from *The Grim Adventures of Billy and Mandy* where the two children must save Santa from becoming a vampire with the help of pal the

Grim Reaper. Yikes! Bloo and his entourage encounter the pitfalls of shopping in *Foster's Home for Imaginary Friends*' "Store Wars." Other titles include *Code-name Kids Next Door* "Operation N.A.U.G.H.T.Y." as well as Ed, Edd n Eddy "In like Ed". A fine assortment of toons to snuggle up with all month long. [Release date: Oct. 3]

Koala Brothers Outback Christmas [Lions Gate, \$14.98]

Prepare yourself for some holiday cheer as the BBC's Koala Brothers (produced by Spellbound and Famous Flying Films) invite everyone for a Down Under celebration. In this Christmas-themed outing (originally broadcast as a one-hour special last year) Buster and Frank come to the

rescue of Penny the Penguin, who is suffering from an injured wing in Antarctica. With the aid of unexpected friends, the claymated heroes recover Penny and even make it back to Australia for a rockin' Christmas with the whole gang. It's an adventurous holiday worth checking out, mates! [Release date: Nov. 7]

Mickey Mouse Clubhouse: Mickey Saves Santa and Other Mouseketales [Disney, \$14.99]

Deck the halls with CG-animated versions of Mickey, Minnie, Donald, Daisy, Goofy and, of course, Pluto in this three-part outing, culled from the new series that premiered on the Disney Channel last May. In the never-before-aired episode "Mickey Saves Santa," the gang prepares for a Christmas Eve celebration



until word from Dasher reveals that Santa's sleigh is on the fritz. Obviously, Mickey and Donald must make a mad dash to rescue Santa

using only gumdrops to fuel Chip and Dale's locomotive and a ribbon to harness Santa's sleigh and haul it down Mistletoe Mountain. Along with the mission are episodes: "Mickey Goes Seek" where Donald shows off his skills as the world's greatest hider, and "Goofy's Bird" where Goofy and Mickey jump through all sorts of hoops to return a lost baby back to its mother. All in a day's work for the Clubhouse crew (voiced by the likes of Wayne Allwine, Russi Taylor, Bill Farmer, Tony Anselmo and Tress MacNeille) as they celebrate the holidays in grand Mouse House fashion. [Release date: Nov. 14]

Father Christmas [Sony, \$9.95]

Ever wonder what Jolly Old Saint Nick is really like when he puts down his list and kicks up his heels on vacation? Directed by Dave Unwin, this 1991 adaptation of Raymond Briggs' beautifully drawn children's book gives insight into the life of Santa Claus as he takes some well deserved time off in France, Scotland and even Vegas! Santa's job is much more taxing than one can imagine, so in this family favorite, Father Christmas decides to convert his sleigh into a camper, which is pulled by none other than the famous reindeer, to globe trot the world for some rest and relaxation. Viewers get to see the more human side of Santa during his worldly travels in this classically animated story. *Father Christmas* also ties in nicely with *The Snowman* as the conclusion to Santa's travels is the snowman's party in which young James gets to meet Santa. A double feature of these two animated shorts and some eggnog is just the way to usher in the spirit of the season. Purists, however, should be warned, as the DVD features the Americanized voice of actor William Dennis Hunt in lieu of Brit thesp Mel Smith, who did the honors in the original British broadcast. [Release date: Oct. 24] ■





Class Act

Cartoon Network shakes it like a Polaroid picture with Outkast's Andre Benjamin and *Class of 3000*. by Ryan Ball

Andre "3000" Benjamin rose to stardom as one half of the Grammy-winning hip-hop act Outkast and has since acted in such big Hollywood movies as *Be Cool*, *Four Brothers* and *Idlewild*. Now the multi-talented artist from Atlanta is having a go at conquering the animation world with *Class of 3000*, a new series debuting Friday, Nov. 3, at 8 p.m. (ET/PT) on Cartoon Network. In addition to co-creating the show, Benjamin serves as exec producer and lends his voice to the half-hour, 2D series that features musical segments art directed by some of today's top animation talents.

In the series, Benjamin voices the role of Sunny Bridges, an international music star who leaves the limelight to teach a group of musical prodigies at his old school in Atlanta. Benjamin's

other alter-ego in the show is Li'l D, a leader among the kids at Westley School. Voiced by Atlanta comic Small Fire, Li'l D is a lot like a young Benjamin, who really did attend a school for gifted kids. The show's voice cast also includes toon veterans Tom Kenny (*SpongeBob SquarePants*, *Camp Lazlo*), Phil LaMarr (*Foster's Home for Imaginary Friends*, *Justice League*), Crystal Scales (*Static Shock*, *The Adven-*

tures of Jimmy Neutron: Boy Genius), Jennifer Hale (*Samurai Jack*, *The Powerpuff Girls*), Janice Kawaye (*Hi Hi Puffy AmiYumi*) and Jeff Glen Bennett (*Johnny Bravo*, *Camp Lazlo*).

Getting the Band Together

Benjamin tells us he's been a fan of animation all his life but wasn't actively seeking to add a toon to his resume before co-creator and co-exec producer, live-action kids' impresario Thomas W. Lynch (*Scout's Safari*, *The Journey of Allen Strange*) approached him with the idea of doing a series. "I just like to create," Benjamin says. "I like the creative process, so whatever comes along I go with the flow."

In addition to exec producing the Nickelodeon series *Romeo!*, Lynch has been involved in the production of more than a dozen live-action TV shows and films. Two years ago, while visiting Atlanta, he hooked up with old friend Mike Lazzo, the exec in charge of Cartoon Network's Adult Swim, and mentioned he wanted to do an animated show with a heavy musical element.





TELEVISION



Andre Benjamin



Tommy Lynch

"I said I wanted to get somebody to bring some authenticity with the music, somebody who really sets this apart," Lynch explains. "He and I both started talking and learned that we both loved Outkast. I said, 'I think Andre 3000 is one of the coolest people on the planet right now,' and this is before *The Love Below* got all the Grammy nominations and everything."

Benjamin agreed to come onboard under one condition, that the show take place in Atlanta. "I had all these artists come out and see the neighborhood I grew up in and talk to some of the people who live there so they could get a real feel for it," he tells us. "It's animation, so, of course, it's not exact, but people who are from Atlanta or know the city will be able to point out certain landmarks and say,

'That's just like the real Five Points, I've been there.' That sort of thing."

A "Global" Production

Despite the demands of hip-hop stardom, Benjamin has been very hands-on with the show, according to Lynch. "Andre is as involved in the show as I am," he insists. "He really is a co-creator and co-exec producer, not just in name. We'll talk five or six times a day sometimes and definitely five or six times a week. Because of his schedule and my schedule, I've been in China and talked to him in London. He's been in Atlanta and I've been in New York. He's been in New York and I've been in India. I kind of refer to this as our global production."

Global or not, *Class of 3000* is truly a multi-location collaboration. Layout is done at Cartoon Network Studios in Burbank, Calif. while Benjamin produces the music in Atlanta. The hand-drawn 2D animation is then completed at Rough Draft and Yeson studios in Korea. The show will also feature unique music video segments that are entirely animated in Burbank using Flash and various mixed-media tech-

niques.

Among the guest art directors tapped to help create the music segments are *Aeon Flux* creator Peter Chung, *Ren & Stimpy* creator John Kricfalusi and *The Life and Times of Juniper Lee* director Alan Bodner, who also served as art director on Brad Bird's *The Iron Giant*. The list is filled out by various accomplished Cartoon Network artists, as well as comic-book illustrator Bill Sienkiewicz (*Elektra: Assassin*, *Moon Knight*) and renowned cartoonist Kyle Baker, illustrator of the weekly strip *Bad Publicity* and the Aaron McGruder graphic novel *Birth of a Nation*.

"We have guys who are coming in here and just kind of taking our world and tripping it out into their imagination so the music numbers will stand on their own," says Lynch. "That's been really exciting to see."

Joe Horne, the show's director and supervising producer, says the guest directors are given free reign to redesign the characters to fit the song they're working on. "We give them the lineup of the original designs and then give them the idea of the song and what happens in it," he



explains. "They then go off and dwell and come back and we animate to what they design. We're trying to make each one different from the others, keep the kids on their toes."

When one thinks musical cartoon, the shows that come to mind are cheesy '70s efforts like *Josie and the Pussycats*. And while it's in the same tradition, *Class of 3000* offers some major improvements. "We watched *Jackson Five* with Andre once and he made some important notes about what he didn't want to see happen and it was about how the Jackson's never danced to the beat," says Horne. "He's very adamant about how all the animation is to the beat."

A New Frontier

Since *Class of 3000* is the first animated project for both Lynch and Benjamin, they were admittedly a bit naïve about certain aspects, and Lynch says that's not necessarily a bad thing. "We both can go, 'it hasn't been done, let's go do it,'" he remarks. "That happened in the design stage. We really wanted the show to have a curvature to the characters, a nice, clean line, and that all came from the idea of a music note and how they're curved. I wanted the characters curving and flowing, and we found out along the way that's one of the hardest things to do."

"Not to put things like *Powerpuff Girls* down, but a lot of the animation out there is really blocky, with straight, thick lines, and that's cool, but we wanted something different," Benjamin adds. "We went through a lot of different styles until

in like 50 years.' I think back to the character Rudy in *Fat Albert* and how he moved. He had a lot of flow to his movements."

According to Horne, the overseas animators were more than up to the task of bringing life to these wavy-gravy designs. He notes, "They were just trying to verify that that's what we wanted. They were like, 'Are you sure, man?' The characters can squash and stretch at any time, much like your old Fleischer and black-and-white Disney [cartoons]."

Lynch says one important thing he learned about animation came from head writer and co-exec producer Patric Verrone, whose credits include *The Simpsons*, *Futurama*, *The Critic* and *Pinky and the Brain*. "He said that in animation you're either too early or too late, and I said 'Oh, that's [B.S.]' I'm now finding I'm either too early to start working on something or I'm too late to fix it. And Andre and I both come from a world where we work on our stuff until the last minute."

3000 Voices

Though no stranger to the recording studio, Benjamin felt some pressure to hold his own amongst the show's talented voice cast. "Man, these guys are amaz-

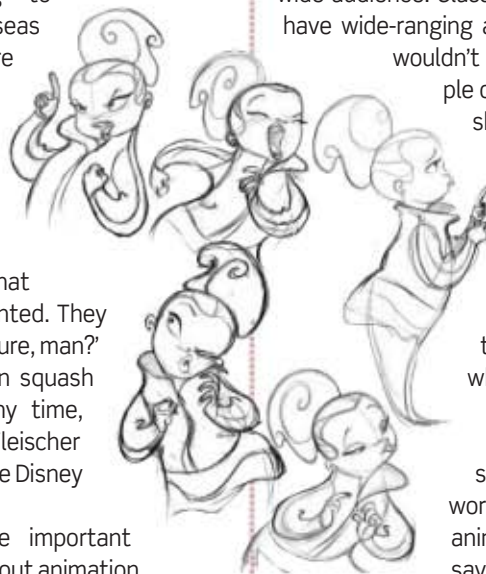
ing," he gushes. "I was a little intimidated at first because these guys were going through all these different characters within like eight minutes. I didn't even know who Tom Kenny was at first, to tell you the truth. We were given all these demo reels to listen to and I heard him and said, that's him, that's the guy who needs to voice this character. And they were like, 'Of course, that's Tom Kenny.'"

Kenny voices the role of Edward Phillip James Lawrence III, a gifted young clarinet player from one of Atlanta's wealthiest families. He's part of a racially and culturally diverse student body much like the one Benjamin was part of as a kid. The artist credits that exposure with helping him become well rounded and fostering an eclectic musical style that appeals to a wide audience. *Class of 3000* should also have wide-ranging appeal and Benjamin

wouldn't be surprised if a couple of the songs from the show end up on the pop charts. "Creatively, this is some of the best stuff I've ever done," he remarks, fully crediting the talented child singers who perform alongside him. But will we see him one day leave stardom behind to work with kids like his animated alter-ego? He says it's a possibility, commenting, "I always

knew that I wouldn't do music forever. I don't want to be one of these old rappers out there on stage." ■

***Class of 3000* is produced by Cartoon Network Studios in association with the Tom Lynch Co. and Benjamin's production company, Moxie. The Nov. 3 premiere kicks off at 7 p.m. (ET/PT) with a special musical event featuring guest star performances at the historic Fox Theatre in Atlanta. The network will also air the half-hour mockumentary *Sunny Bridges: From Bankhead to Buckhead*, which chronicles the life of the fictional superstar voiced by Benjamin.**





A STEAL AT \$ 60 BILLION

Over air, through cable or by satellite, the most ubiquitous media delivery device is the one sitting in your living room. And your bedroom. And possibly your kitchen. Hundreds of channels send thousands of hours of programming into hundreds of millions of homes each year, generating over \$60 billion in U.S. revenue. It's a big pie with a lot of slices, and you can get your piece at the biggest bake shop in the largest market on earth.

EVOLVE & PROSPER™

NATPE 07

CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION
MONDAY – THURSDAY
1.15.07* – 1.18.07
MANDALAY BAY RESORT
LAS VEGAS, NEVADA
*1.15.07 Featuring Mobile++

www.NATPE.org

© 2006 NATPE. All rights reserved.

Fresh Market Wrap

Yes, the 14th edition of MIPCOM Junior and the 22nd edition of MIPCOM have come and gone and all the many animated shows, creators and execs we saw at the Cannes market have formed a colorful conga line in our collective memories. But, hey, somebody was taking good notes. Overall, 529 companies showed up for Jr. (up from 512 in 2005), and 937 shows were screened—and get this, 42,848 screenings were registered at Junior. Those are some serious numbers, and we are glad that many of the toon players at the event took the time to talk about and show us their inspiring projects: Here are a few show highlights and newsmakers which we'll be keeping an eye on in the months ahead:

TELEVISION

Mischief and Mayhem Mean Money!

Carlos Biern, head of coproductions and new tech developments at Barcelona-based toon house **BRB Internacional** had a real rocking time at the market. Not only did his go-second, 52-episode toon **The Imp** (co-produced with Red Kite) win MIPCOM Jr.'s Licensing Challenge contest, the company's hot new CG-animated series **Angus & Cheryl** landed on the No. 3 spot on the Junior's Buyers' Screening list. "We're targeting not only child audiences but adolescents too, taking animation to iPods and mobiles," adds the ebullient Biern. "This is a very clear trend—animation content travels faster and has a longer life!" He also tells us that the second season of *Bernard* (the charming CG-animated polar bear) has been sold worldwide, while *Khudayana* got a commitment from Jetix Europe. "Really, what else could we ask for!?" he inquires.

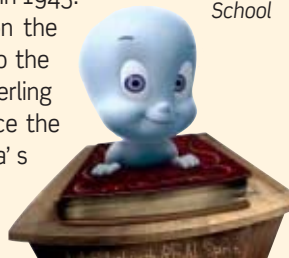


A Spirited Comeback

An old, familiar ghost has got a new lease on life thanks to the folks at **MoonScoop**, **Classic Media** and India's **DQ Ent.** First created by Seymour Reit and Joe Oriolo in 1945, **Casper the Friendly Ghost** will be the star of a new 52x11-minute series, which is set to commence production in February 2007. "

Paramount released the first animated Casper short back in 1945. The friendly ghost then went on to win millions of fans on the pages of Harvey comic books and on television. He was also the star of a live-action/CG-animated movie directed by Brad Silberling in 1995 and several direct to DVD titles. The deal to produce the new Casper TV show follows the completion of Classic Media's CG-animated feature *Casper's Scare School*, which aired on Cartoon Network last month.

Casper's Scare School



Retro Is In!

We have a soft spot for all the projects in development at **Silver Lining** (which is now owned by parent company Chorion). But we were especially glad to see a new series based on the popular **Mr. Men Show** created by toon veterans Kate Boutiller (*Rugrats Go Wild!*, *The Wild Thornberrys Movie*) and Eryk Casemiro (*Rugrats*, *The Wild Thornberrys*). Silver Lining's president Diana Manson tells us that the sketch comedy show will be made up of segments with varied lengths (some are six-minutes, some 15-seconds, etc.) Each bit will feature the different residents of Happyland (that's Mr. Men and Little Misses) as they take on new jobs, face special challenges or find themselves clashing with their neighbors. We'll all get a chance to see a little bit of ourselves in characters such as Mr. Messy, Little Miss Chatterbox, Mr. Grumpy and Little Miss Naughty!



Gloriously Ghoulish

Bringing new multi-platform vignette versions of *Atomic Betty*, *Miss BG* and *Captain Flamingo*, **Breakthrough Animation** producer and partner **Kevin Gillis** was heavily in demand at the market. We were lucky enough to see a wonderful clip from his new project called **The Orphanage**. Set in a home for peculiarly monstrous "children" waiting for adoption, the series is packed full of quirky characters that would make Morticia and Charles Addams proud. "Everyone we've shown it to really gets the show's premise immediately," says Gillis. Created by 27-year old Brad Peyton, the stop-motion animated show takes many of its brilliant visual cues from Tim Burton classics. We can't wait for the tie-in Halloween costumes! Canada's CBC-TV has been airing the show since June, and we hope everyone around the world gets to see it, pronto!



Speedy Explosion

It's always a pleasure to come across an animated project that's truly poised to attract a huge global audience. American-born **Tim Mostert**, cartoonist for South Africa's *Daily Sun* newspaper, showed us some amazing clips from his new CG-animated series

Speedy, based on his daily comic strip. The show launched on SABC2 in 2004 and is seen by nine million viewers five nights a week. Billed as "South Africa's Township Hero," the series features universal characters and comical situations that can entertain viewers in all nations. Not only is the show packaged as both 52 one-minute episodes (perfect for cell-phone downloads) and 52x11 segments for primetime. Wait, there's more: *Speedy* will also be used as an ambassador for the U.N. and at a Water Conservation conference in November in New York. A note to the sharp development execs at Fox TV and Comedy Central: *Speedy* could be the ideal companion to *The Simpsons* or *South Park*. Grab it before everyone else jumps on the bandwagon!



Speedy

Monster Gets in the Moods

Anyone having to deal with a sullen teen will identify with Icelandic animated offering ***Anna and the Moods***. Narrated by Bjork, Damon Albarn and Terry Jones, this 3D-animated toon from Iceland digital design and animation outfit Caoz centers on a "perfect child" who



Anna and the Moods

wakes up with a horrible illness that makes her look like Marilyn Manson and feel pretty darn

moody. Her parents are horrified when they find out the doc's diagnosis—she's a teenager! This quirky project is written by Oscar-nominated Sjon on a commission from the British string quartet, the Brodsky Quartet. It's produced by Hilmar Sigurdsson and Arnar Thorisson of Caoz in Reykjavik and features music by Julian Nott (*Wallace & Gromit: The Curse of the Were-Rabbit*). The always-eclectic Andrew Fitzpatrick and his team at **Monster Distributes** drummed up a lot of interest for *Anna* at the market.

Hello, Flying Bark!

Leading Aussie toon and children's shows producer Yoram Gross-EM.TV, unveiled its new corporate identity at MIPCOM. Now known as **Flying Bark Prods.**, the company was re-branded after EM.Entertainment GmbH acquired the remaining 50 percent of Yoram Gross-EM.TV. The new name is intended to reflect the original, bold and contemporary vision of the Sydney-based corporation, which houses four primary divisions including Greenpatch Prods., Forest Interactive and Trackdown Digital.

"The name change symbolizes the innovative approach of the company," comments **Susanne Schosser**, managing director of EM.Entertainment GmbH and Junior. TV GmbH & Co. KG. "With Flying Bark Prods., we intimately connect the strengthening of production skills in high-quality entertainment as well as the intensification of activities within the interactive segment."

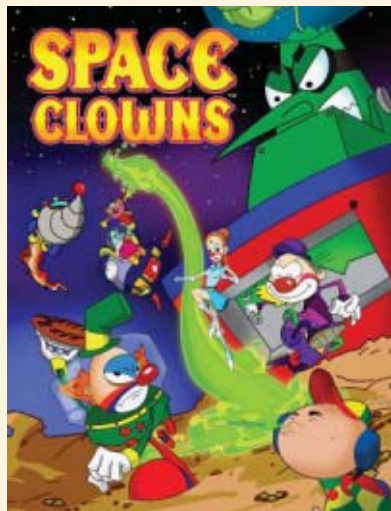
The unveiling of Flying Bark Prods. at MIPCOM coincided with the debut of the company's first new production, ***Zigby***. The 3D-animated project for pre-schoolers is developed by Greenpatch and will be co-produced with ABC Australia.



Zigby

TELEVISION

Hotel Fire Can't Stop Foothill Couple!



Let's hear it for the fighting spirits of **Foothill Entertainment** execs Greg Payne and Jo Kavanagh-Payne. After a Cannes hotel room fire destroyed most of their shows' promotional material, they continued to forge ahead and do great business—and did we mention poor Jo was already putting up with a broken ankle before the incident? Foothill was shopping an expanded catalogue brought about by a recent strategic alliance with Malaysian producer Vision Animation. Foothill is now the exclusive worldwide distributor, excluding Asia, for five Vision shows.

Among Foothill's new shows is a clever 2D-animated (26x30) sci-fi spoof called ***Space Clowns***. The show revolves around a motley crew of space-traveling circus clowns who fight the villainous schemes of an Evil Ringmaster—Eat your heart out, Ronald McDonald! We hope the delightful Foothill couple found the time after the market to relax and restore their energy before returning to their busy schedules back home in Santa Barbara, Calif. (And that Greg's legal background wins them free luxury rooms at the Riviera hotel for life!)

Junior's Top 10

The following were the most-screened animated shows by buyers at the MIPCOM Jr. market:

1. Shaun the Sheep (Aardman)
2. Amy's Gang (Ettamogah)
3. Angus and Cheryl (BRB)
4. Chaotic (4Kids)
5. Skunk Fu! (Cake)
6. Monster Buster Club (Marathon)
7. Grossology (Nelvana)
8. Anna and the Moods (Caoz Ltd.)
9. Bugged (Sparkling)
10. Best Ed (g Story)



Boy Behaving Badly



Horrid Henry

It's always great to catch up with the **Mike Watts**, managing director of U.K.-based **Novel Entertainment**, who was generating a lot of interest for two of the company's new toons. Novel is producing a new show based on the best-selling **Horrid Henry** children's books (penned by Francesca Simon and illustrated by Tony Ross), which have sold over six million copies worldwide. Watts and company are delivering the 52x11 2D toon for ITV this fall with help from Studio Baestarts and Toonz Animation India. Lucinda Whiteley is the show's producer, and Dave Unwin has signed on as director.

At Cartoon Forum, Watts also got a lot of positive feedback Novel's preschool show **Ping and Pong** (26x11), which is described as "a modern fairy tale about a girl called Ping and a little dragon named Pong." The two are joined by Bounce, the red ball, which leads them to all kinds of adventures and helps viewers at home solve visual puzzles about abstract notions. Actress Samantha Morton has expressed interest in lending her voice to the beautifully drawn project.



Ping and Pong

Comet Crazy About Condoms

We've come to expect the unexpected from the creative team at **Comet Entertainment**. That's why we weren't too surprised that one of their newest projects is an adult animated show called



Sex Police, which chronicles the adventures of Wrappy the Condom as he explores the many forms of sexual issues and problems in today's modern world! The 13x26 show is bound to raise a few eyebrows, but company COO **Carmen Llanos** and CEO **Raquel Benitez** tell us that they love the challenge of offering TV viewers something different, bold and, perhaps, controversial. The Toronto-based shop is also offering a 75-minute High-Def traditionally animated feature from Fanciful Arts

Animation called **Santa versus Claus** in which the old man has to come to terms with the real spirit of Christmas! We have a feeling no other toon company in the world has projects as diverse as these!

Dumb Dog, Prehistoric Teen

Ever heard of **Rintindumb**, the dumbest dog in the West? French house **Xilam** president and founder **Marc du Pontavice** hopes the world will get better acquainted with the slow pooch. The new 75x80-second clips are based on the not-so-bright dog from the **Lucky Luke** comics by Morris and Goscinny. "It has all the elements of classic animated comedies, and it's packaged for short-format platforms which are really taking off in Europe and some Asian countries," says Pontavice. Also on the Xilam plate is another comic-based property, **Rahan**, which is set 35,000 years ago and follows the adventures of a pre-historic 16-year-old hero and a fur-covered creature known as Ursus the bear king! As exotic as the show sounds, it has all the key ingredients to make it a hit with seven- to 13-year-old audiences.



Rahan

The Padded Cel

I Saw Mommy Suing Santa Clause or The Jolly Signs It's Holiday Season in Animation



by Robby London

In Los Angeles, where much of the animation industry is based, many bemoan the lack of winter weather and absence of traditional icons to usher in the holiday spirit. I beg to differ. The signs are everywhere if you just look for them! Up in the sky, where there is a magical reddish-green tinge to the smog. At the mall, where the parking lot mugger wears a Santa disguise. On Hollywood Boulevard, where dealers offer special holiday-themed packaging on designer drug assortments. In the foothills, where crackling brush fires roast chestnuts in bulk. In Barnes & Noble stores, where the sales of screenwriting books spike nearly as high as the number of screenwriters working as Barnes & Noble gift-wrappers. At your local place of worship, which is closed for the holidays due to location shooting. And as nearby as your telephone, where the entertainment attorney suing you says "Happy holidays" right before "See you in court."

But what about holiday harbingers unique to those of us who work in animation? Here's a simple guide to help you spot the tell-tale signs!

Swagciculture: Yep, if you work in animation, you know 'tis the season when all your cheap friends start demanding free art and merchandise for their holiday gifts. Do what I do. Take a stand and simply say "For the last time, Sumner, go buy your damn gifts!"

The Great Approval Chase: Of course much of the world simply shuts down for the holidays—but not animation production. Airdates and release dates don't change and schedules are schedules. If

only the Pentagon ran this reliably! A tip of our Santa hat to those dedicated souls who toil straight through New Year's Day and yet would never dream of resenting the high-paid executives and rights holders whom they have to track down on the slopes of Aspen for creative approvals.

Oh, Come O' Ye Unemployed: It's a sad truth that during the holiday season I

close personal friends. You know—the ones you've never heard of. Who are looking for a job. (See above.) A subtle clue for the ultra-observant is the resume enclosed with the card.

The Company Christmas Party: In every other industry, at the company party, drunken employees risk being fired for consummating long-simmering passions in an uncontrollable burst of—animal sex! In animation, drunken employees risk being fired for consummating long-simmering passions in an uncontrollable burst of drawing unflattering caricatures of the boss having sex with animals!

Christmas Bribes: Er, I mean ... *gifts* from contractors and anyone else who smells a chance of getting more work from you next year. Of course, these days it's against most companies' policies—and clearly unethical—to accept anything more valuable than a mere token. When I'm given something of value, I know it is wrong to keep it! So, I immediately put it up for sale on eBay and use the proceeds to buy something I actually want.

As you read this, the holiday season will be fast approaching. So, all kidding aside, I'd like to take this opportunity sincerely to wish the happiest of holidays to my entire faithful readership: Merry Christmas, Mom! ■

Robby London is an award-winning animation veteran who likes to spend the holiday season traveling to exotic places with Angelina, Brad and Madonna and helping them select the perfect politically correct children to adopt.

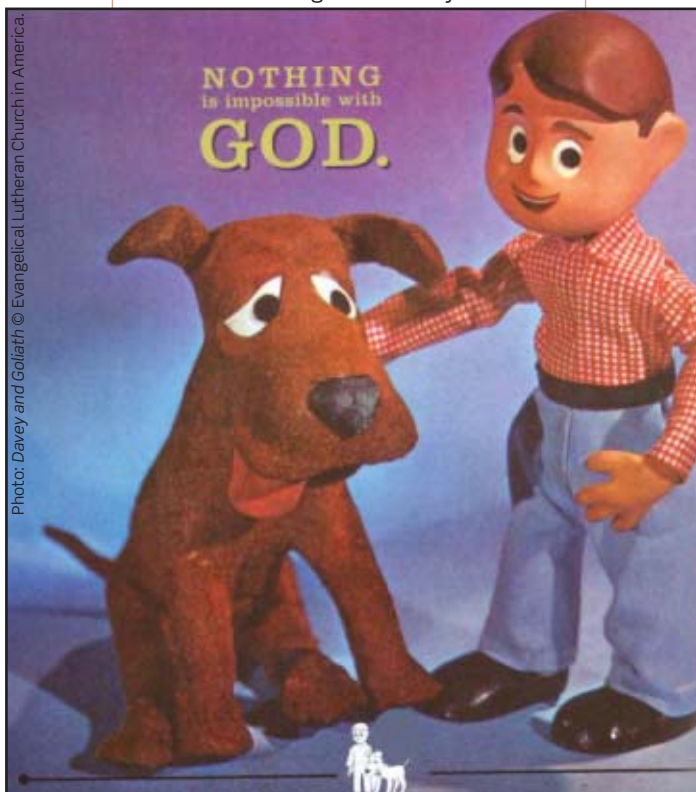


Photo: Davey and Goliath © Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

seem to hear from more people who claim to be desperately seeking work. The thing is ... all of the people in a position to hire are gone (see above). Not to be judgmental (moi?), but one can't help but question the true motives of those whose job search is limited to December. Hell, I *invented* that trick: wait till the dishes are done and *then* offer to help! I usually suggest they check Craig's List ... North Pole.

Holiday Cards at the Office: From your

Beyond the Happy, Shiny Futurespeak

How to read between the lines and sift through the hype to find out the truth about the future of animated podcasts and web content. **by Chris Grove**

NEW MEDIA

Andy Warhol, Marshall McLuhan and George Orwell may make an eccentric threesome, but events of the early 21st century have proven that they belong together. Why? Because they were all right. In a world of YouTube, RSS feeds, blogging, podcasts and streaming video, anyone can have 15 minutes of fame (at least with an off-center, home-produced video) and have it be available on-demand to anyone, anywhere in the world (the Global Village). All the while, Big Brother (in the form of Internet traffic monitoring) is not only watching it all, he's counting heads as well.

or small studios distribute their work to a worldwide audience without getting the seal of approval from major media companies," says Evan Spiridellis, co-founder of Santa Monica-based JibJab Media Inc. JibJab, among many other projects, is the company behind the now legendary animated *This Land is Your Land* spoof starring George W. Bush and John Kerry. According to figures supplied by the Center for Media Research, there are now an estimated 46 million broadband households in the U.S. and 102 million broadband users. With 25 million video-enabled devices smaller than a PC now in the hands of U.S. consumers, the

average person spent a total of 6.5 minutes on the site, according to Nielsen/NetRatings. JibJab does not podcast its content, preferring to distribute its content from the website jibjab.com.

Spiridellis says the privately held company is examining the possibility of adding podcasts to its repertoire.

Halfway around the world, meanwhile, Sydney, Australia-based animator Dael Oates reports modest success with his early podcasting efforts. His animated music video for Telemetry Orchestra (*Under the Cherry Tree*) was a top pick on a recent Frederator podcast (Episode 49). "(It) was the first time my work had been broadcast this way," says Oates, a designer and art director at Animal Logic. "The results have been really positive." Interest in Oates' work and that of the band have spiked since the video's release. When asked if the attention has increased his cachet in the creative community, Oates says it's too early to tell.

Whether ad-supported or sponsored, podcast, streamed or downloaded, the outlines of a web-based content business model remains unclear, says Larry Kramer, president of CBS Digital, in a recent *Business Week*

Folk Heroes: Gregg and Evan Spiridellis' hit toon *This Land* recorded 5 million hits the first week of its release on jibjab.com.



Gregg (left) and Evan Spiridellis

"At no point in history before the advent of the web, could individual creators or small studios distribute their work to a worldwide audience without getting the seal of approval from major media companies."

—Evan Spiridellis, co-founder of JibJab Media

But for all the hype about podcasting and its related methods of downloading or streaming content, is it already the next big thing? If not, will it soon be? And are these important considerations for a young (or not so young) animator with big dreams, no industry connections and little money? Well, yes, sort of!

"At no point in history before the advent of the web could individual creators

platform is definitely in place.

"We have always believed that if people produce quality work and put it out into the world then it will eventually attract an audience," Spiridellis continues. The pre-2004 election *This Land* short recorded 5 million hits the first week of its release. More recently, for the month of September 2006, jibjab.com attracted a unique audience of 573,000, where the

American Splendor: Orrin (left) and Jerry Zucker's smash web project *It's Jerry Time* received an Emmy nomination this year and generated a lot of interest from TV development executives.



Orrin (left) and Jerry Zucker

podcast. Some venture capitalists are predicting that ad revenue in this new web space could top \$2 billion in the next three to five years. Kramer is wary of such projections. "I have no idea," he says. "The revenue (numbers) will depend on the technology and how easy it is to use." One recent example involving CBS content does provide a tantalizing glimpse at what *might* be. In January 2006, the network offered *CSI: Miami* viewers a bonus scene from an episode, available only on the web. It drew 2 million viewers, half of whom watched a 15-second teaser spot for Hummer (a car driven by the series lead character played by David Caruso) and a 60-second spot at the end of the scene. "To some degree the web is still a bit like the Wild West and new

business models are emerging all the time," says JibJab's Spiridellis.

In a larger sense, many creative people see podcasting as just another component of a bigger, ongoing media revolution. In the beginning there was the Web. Now, just ten years after most consumers were cruising the Internet with 56K modems, complex mobile entertainment is on the horizon and approaching quickly. Sooner rather than later, IP tele-

vision will be in people's living rooms, allowing consumers to seek out what they like from a sea of options, independent from the limited offerings of the traditional media.

Some young animators, while happy with the opportunities podcasting offers them, are not so keen on the current technology. "On the one hand it's great because people are watching more animation," says Esteban Azuela, a recent graduate of the Vancouver Film School. "(But) we are losing punch to our stories.

Watching on an iPod waiting for the bus will never be the same as going to a theatre, where you're 'surrounded' by the



Jennifer Shiman

film. In shrinking the film to 320x240 we have a bigger audience, but we're losing the energy of the film."

Grand designs aside, for indepen-

Hare Apparent: Jennifer Shiman's popular *Bunny Movie* spoofs (pictured is a recent take on *Superman*) were picked up by Starz movie channel.





Podcasting News:
Sydney-based Animal Logic animator Dael Oates' music video *Under the Cherry Tree* grabbed a lot of eyeballs on Fred Seibert's Frederator ton podcast recently.

dent animators the various forms of web distribution have been a boon. Jennifer Shiman's *Bunny Movie* spoofs are a case in point. Now featured on the Starz movie channel, the 30-second animated versions of Hollywood films first came to life on her website (angryalien.com). "Lots of entertainment companies, both locally and overseas, have expressed interest in developing programming with me," says Shiman. "All due to a measurable audience response to my work." Shiman also does not podcast, preferring to keep content on her site and updating it via RSS feed. The site has no advertising, so Shiman earns income from the sale of Bunny-related merchandise and through PayPal donations, which generally offset the cost of running the website.

There is no question, however, that animation on the web has broadened the genre's possibilities and made available to consumers content they would *never* have had the chance to see on television. And it has given unknown animators a way for their work to reach a mass audience at little cost. One of the current poster children for this assertion is to be found in the animated shorts from the creative minds of Orrin and Jerry Zucker (not to be

confused with the Zucker brothers of *Airplane!* fame) on itsjerrytime.com.

The series, which lives in a world halfway between Jerry Seinfeld and Harvey Pekar, follows the exploits of Jerry as he endures the vicissitudes of his life in Needham, Massachusetts. Jerry Zucker works at his brother's broadcast design firm, Ozone. It was there that the idea for the series was hatched. Nominated for an Emmy this year (in a new category for programming created specifically for non-traditional viewing platforms), the series didn't even exist as an idea until late

something just clicked in for him," says Zucker. "We knew right away that we would use the web as our means of distribution."

Even though they didn't win the Emmy (They lost to AOL's webcast of the Live 8 concert of all things!), the Zuckers' series is a big hit on the web and generating them offers in the old media world. "I might stop short to say [content is] more original on the web than on TV be-



Dael Oates

"If you carve out a niche for yourself on the web, you get a certain cache with TV executives that you couldn't get otherwise."

—Jerry Zucker, co-creator of *It's Jerry Time*

2005. "One of the producers we work with at Ozone suggested we try our hand at original programming," Jerry Zucker recalls. After a few false starts, the brothers decided to create animated shorts of the stories Jerry had been telling his brother most of his adult life. "It was on the way back from lunch that I told Orrin the *Who's That Guy?* story (Episode 1) for the first time and

cause TV is the breeding ground for continued excellence", Zucker continues. "(But) if you carve out a niche for yourself on the web, you get a certain cachet with [TV] executives that you couldn't get otherwise. The big question is: Can future cross-over shows become sustainable hits on TV? I think they can." ■

Chris Grove is a Los Angeles-based journalist and actor.

The best time to **THINK** about education was years ago.
The second best time is right now.

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE

REGISTER NOW FOR SPRING — CLASSES START JANUARY 29
1.800.544.ARTS / ACADEMYART.EDU



ACADEMY of ART UNIVERSITY

FOUNDED IN SAN FRANCISCO 1929 BY ARTISTS FOR ARTISTS
79 New Montgomery Street, San Francisco, CA 94105

Accredited member ACICS, NASAD, Council for Interior Design Accreditation
(formerly FIDER) (BEA-IAD), NAAB (M-ARCH)

ONLINE DEGREES & CLASSES

**ANIMATION
AND VISUAL EFFECTS,
ILLUSTRATION, GRAPHIC
DESIGN, COMPUTER ARTS NEW
MEDIA, FINE ART, PHOTOGRAPHY,
ARCHITECTURE, ADVERTISING,
INDUSTRIAL DESIGN, INTERIOR
ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN, MOTION
PICTURES & TELEVISION, FASHION**



Image by Eva Kolenin, BFA, Photography

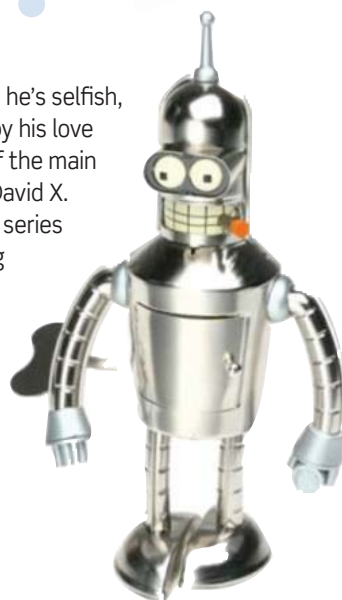
The Animation Lovers' Holiday Gift Guide

We have taken the leg work out of your shopping this holiday season and picked a Dy-No-Mite selection of books, DVDs, toys, tech tools and trinkets that are bound to please those picky toonheads in your lives. Or you can simply put these goodies on your must-have list so Santa Claus, Hanukah Harry, All-forgiving Allah or Kwanza Kenny will know exactly what to bring you this year!



Heart of Steel

Like many of our most popular cartoon characters, he's selfish, childlike, greedy, annoying and completely driven by his love for himself! Yes, we're talking about **Bender**, one of the main reasons we all fell in love with Matt Groening and David X. Cohen's original Fox show, *Futurama*. Now that the series is in production again, you can celebrate by getting your hands on a beautiful nine-inch **Bright 'n Shiny** version of the metallic monster. Packaged in a killer blue-and-silver edition box, this must-have toy comes with Bender's familiar stogie and a new can of Mom's Old-Fashioned Robot Oil. Now who wouldn't want to find this wind-up, walking, metallic monster (priced around \$24.99) under the old Christmas tree?



Mind Candy

There are very few animation lovers who don't have a special place in their hearts for comic books. That's why one of the best gifts for animators this holiday season may very well be the crisp new inaugural volume of Houghton Mifflin's **The Best American Comics** (\$22) series. Edited by Harvey Pekar (*American Splendor*) and Anne Elizabeth Moore (*Punk Planet* magazine), this 382-page joyride offers a mind-blowing collection of graphic faves, from Rebecca Dart's *Rabbithead* and Alex Robinson's *Tricked* to Justin Hal's *La Rubia Loca*.



This sampler gives us both established artists such as Crumb, Lynda Barry, Chris Ware and Jaime Hernandez and newcomers such as Lillie Carre and Jesse Reklaw (who shares the tale of a torn childhood and the author's relationship with 13 ill-fated pet kittens!). These smart, fantastic and, at times, quite poignant tales may very well be the antidote to those nightmarish holiday family gatherings!

LICENSING

Raiders of the DVD Vaults

This holiday season, there are so many new animated DVDs to pick from, you really need a little pet robot to keep track of all the titles. Several of this year's feature releases—Disney/Pixar's *Cars* and Fox/Blue Sky's *Ice Age: The Meltdown*, Nickelodeon/Paramount's *Barnyard*, Warner Bros.' *The Ant Bully*, Warner Indie's *A Scanner Darkly* and Sony's *Monster House*—hit the stores one after another. Then, you have the classic TV shows bowing out for collectors: For example, Disney TV Animation's original series *The Gummi Bears* (circa 1985) comes out on DVD for the first time. Other hot packages include the second volumes of the Warner Bros.' *Animaniacs* and *Pinky and The Brain* series. Prime-time auds will welcome the release of *The Simpsons: Season Nine* and *Family Guy: Season Four*.

In a complete class of its own is Warner Bros.' *Looney Tunes Golden Collection, Vol. 4* (see page 16) as are three glorious **Walt Disney Treasures** packs arriving in December: *The Complete Pluto Vol. 2*, *More Silly Symphonies* and *Your Host Walt Disney*. Oh, and did we mention the Mouse House has also prepared a new remastered version of its 1973 feature *Robin Hood* (dubbed the *Most Wanted Edition*) and a sequel to the 1981 feature, *The Fox and the Hound*? You can really blow your whole year's salary on all these entertaining discs, so make sure your pet robot is keeping an eye on your wallet as well.





Digital Box of Delights

We know when it comes to software and tech tools, animators have a tendency to be early adopters. But if your friends or family members aren't working with a **Toon Boom Storyboard**



program, then you may consider purchasing this hot little item this holiday season. With a price tag of \$89g, this easy-to-use software is ideal for anyone who likes working with a digital storyboard. It features a flexible layer-based panel display with mo-cap abilities, a complete set of drawing tools (including a pressure-sensitive brush tool for digital graphic tablet and pen), customizable caption fields to insert searchable textual content, advanced timeline and real-time animatic creation with dynamic camera moves. In addition, Toon Boom's Storyboard has export capabilities including printing, image sequences and Harmony/Opus/Solo, EDL SWF and QuickTime file formatting. To find out more, visit www.toonboom.com and see for yourself how this handy package can speed up the storyboarding process beyond belief.

Those Magnificent Mutants

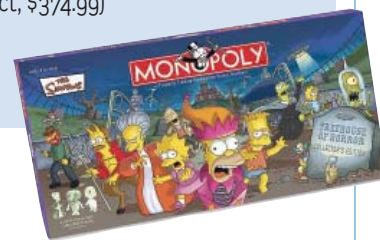
Our hat is off to frequent *Animation Magazine* contributor **Michael Mallory** who has spent a big chunk of his time researching and writing about Stan Lee and Jack Kirby's classic Marvel characters *The X-Men*. The result is a wonderful coffee table book that will be the envy of anyone who has even a passing interest in these fascinating mutant superheroes and heroines. Mallory, the man behind the equally essential *Marvel: The Characters and Their Universe* tome from a few years back, looks at the history and evolution of the X-Men and gives us valuable insights into the development and artistic inspirations of the group. Included in this handsome 300-page compendium are all kinds of facts, trivia and beautiful pictures of key covers, movie stills (director Bryan Singer is a contributor) and illustrations. Simply put, you can't really call yourself a real X-fan until you have this book in your library. *X-Men: The Characters and Their Universe* (published by Hugh Lauter Levin Assoc.) has a listed price of \$75, but you can get it for much less on amazon.com or at a Barnes & Noble store near you! It's bound to erase the memory of this past summer's underwhelming movie from your mind.



Ten New Trinkets

Check out this list of Entertainment Earth's (www.entertainmentearth.com) newly arrived toys for that special collector/geek in your life!

- Batman Two-Face 13-Inch Collector Figure (DC Direct, \$69.99)
- Buffy/Angel Vampire Plush Puppet (Diamond, \$49.99)
- Disney Magic Kingdom Game (Hasbro, \$24.99)
- Looney Tunes Golden Collection Series 1 Case (Diamond, \$109.99)
- Lord of the Rings Checkers, Tic Tac Toe in a Tin (Usaopoly, \$14.99)
- Marvel Minimates Series 13 Case (Diamond, \$104.99)
- Rat Fink Deluxe Figure & Skateboard Case (Jonzo, \$179.99)
- Star Wars Cartoon-Style Coffee Mug Set (Encore, \$29.99)
- Superman Returns Daily Planet Weta Statue (DC Direct, \$374.99)
- The Simpsons Treehouse of Horror Monopoly (Usaopoly, \$35.99)



Electric Shock Therapy

What do you get for that spoiled rich kid (or *Simpsons* fan) who has everything? How about the new Funco **Itchy and Scratchy Bobble Bank** (priced around \$24.99) which hasn't even been available until this month? This diabolical device has poor Scratchy positioned in an electric chair with Itchy, well, just itching to flip the lever. The 12-inch-tall bank also plays a nerve-racking electrocution sound every time you add a coin to your savings—and of course, Itchy and Scratchy's heads nod in approval. Why didn't they have banks like these when we were kids, darnit!



Back to Bikini Bottom!

It's Christmas Eve and not a creature is stirring in the house—except you and your spanking new **SpongeBob SquarePants Creature from the Krusty Krab** game (\$39.99). Designed by the folks at Blitz Games, this new THQ release (for GameCube, PS2, Game Boy Advance, Nintendo DS, and, yes, Wii!) offers four types of play: flying, destruction, racing and walking all over nine imaginary worlds in the mind of our hero. If you're lucky enough to play on the Wii, you can use the controller like a real plane stick! There's even a giant-sized Plankton to get rid of in the destructive levels. We can't think of a better way to spend those sweet, restful hours surrounded by the comforts of home and Stephen Hillenburg's resilient, yellow, porous creature.



LICENSING

Scent of a Prince

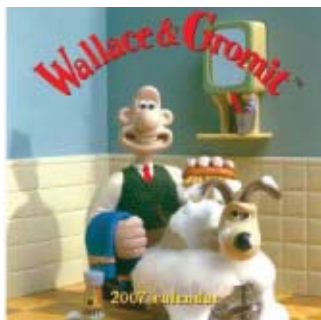
For over five decades, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's charming fable **Le Petit Prince** (The Little Prince) has won the hearts and minds of millions of fans all over the world. Not only has the book been translated to over 70 languages, it has spawned animated features and even a live-action musical retelling starring Gene Hackman. We noticed that this year, fans can even get their hands on Le Petit Prince colognes, citrusy eau de toilettes, soaps and lotions, china, t-shirts and unisex birthday sets (available both via amazon.com and at Fred Segal's and other specialty boutiques around the country).

So if you've ever wondered what a blonde-haired prince from a distant star smells like, all you have to do is buy this beautiful 3.4 oz. bottle of eau de toilette (priced at \$18). And that's a steal considering how popular it will make you with the other aliens from his corner of the world.

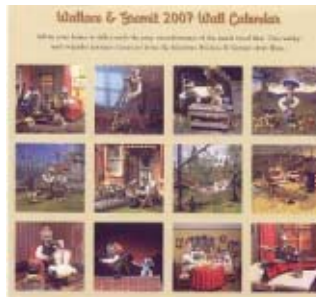


A Claymated Calendar

Finding a calendar in a book store in November is as easy as finding a corrupt politician in office. Last time we checked, there were numerous colorful 12-month and 365-day calendars featuring anything from *The Simpsons* and *Peanuts* to *Cars*, *Over the Hedge*, *Ice Age 2*, *Open Season* and that old reliable, Gary Larson's *The Far Side*. The one that always makes us reach for our wallets is the delightful 12-month **Wallace & Gromit 2007 Calendar** (\$12.95).



There's something about the shiny colors, the whimsical humor and the sheer appeal of Nick Park's characters that makes turning the pages an absolute joy. As much as we love the CG-animated rodents of *Flushed Away*, the photos in this 2007 calendar make us anticipate the next W&G adventure even more. We hope it's soon, Mr. Park!



Bald and Beautiful

We didn't lump **Avatar: The Last Airbender's** glorious six-disc collector's item with all the other DVD picks this month, because this Paramount release really stands out in a cluttered field. Nickelodeon's anime-influenced series has been slowly building a faithful following in many countries, and although it's worlds apart from the cabler's other big hits (*SpongeBob SquarePants* and *The Fairly OddParents*), it's clear to see why both kids and



adults are drawn to its textured and deeply addictive universe. Created by Michael Dante DiMartino and Brian Konietzko, the show centers on a reluctant 12-year-old (Aang) who must face his destiny and master his latent powers to conquer the Firebenders, evil wizards who threaten the world. All 20 episodes of *Book One: Water* are included in this handsome DVD package which comes with a whole disc of extras. The official price is \$64.99, but you can definitely pick it up for \$45 on amazon.com and program your own eight-hour viewing marathon.

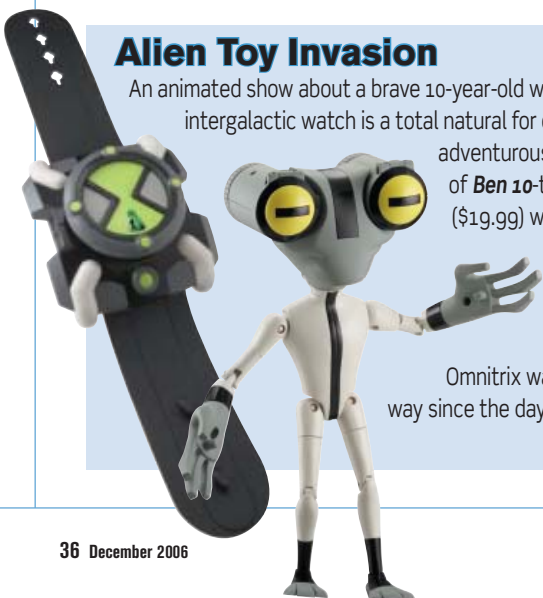
Alien Toy Invasion

An animated show about a brave 10-year-old who can unleash a variety of cool alien heroes via his intergalactic watch is a total natural for cool toy tie-ins. That's why this holiday season, the young adventurous fan in your household may be pining for a wide selection

of **Ben 10**-themed Bandai toys. We love the Metamorphigures lines (\$19.99) which features awesome two-toys-in-one packages: The

Greymatter Alien figure, for example, morphs into a pair of binoculars; the DNA Alien has a light-up head, glow-in-the-dark slime AND launches missiles with his arms. We

also know a lot of young kids who are crazy about the actual Omnitrix watches and alien ships. Yes, the alien toy industry has come a long way since the days of *Star Wars* and *E.T.*!



A Blast from the TV's Past

New York's Museum of Comic and Cartoon Arts brings back historic Saturday morning cartoons in a one-of-a-kind exhibit. **by Jake Friedman**

How'd you like to lay your eyes on an authentic 3'x3' Smurf Village play-set, which helped spawn the cartoon series? Or an original printing of "The Chipmunk Song," the inspiration for Alvin? Or



The Care Bears



Fat Albert



Flash Gordon

the series bible for Disney's *Gummi Bears*? For the first time ever, scores of classic cartoon shows are gathering under one roof. The Museum of Comic and Cartoon Art, New York City's only cultural center devoted to the toon world, is holding an exhibit titled "Saturday Morning: Art & Artifacts from the Golden Age of Television."

"It's something most people can relate to," says Matt Murray, curator and MoCCA's

chief operating officer. "Everyone has a favorite Saturday morning cartoon." The exhibit, which runs from November 18 to March 16, will include regular screenings, lectures and a gallery filled with original art and memorabilia. Most of the items are focused on the time between 1966 and 1990, referred to as the "Golden Age" of Saturday morning cartoons.

"The reason why it's considered the 'Golden Age,' is that was when the most kids were 'tooned-in,' so to speak," says Murray, who spent months researching this exhibit with books like Jerry Beck's *Animation Art* and The Burke Brothers' *Saturday Morning Fever*, not to mention autobiographies by both Bill Hannah and Joe Barbera, websites like toonopedia.com, and his own Saturday morning memories.

"Kids have more options these days. There weren't 24-hour cable cartoon channels. There were only three networks, and in 1966 all three began programming original content for Saturday morning." Murray also notes why this period ended in the 1990s. "That's when the Children's Television Act was passed by Congress to increase the quantity of educational programming on television, and that's when you see networks throwing in the towel and programming news shows ... Also, the divorce rate had spiked and weekend mornings became very important to parents; there were drives to get kids more active in sports on weekends."

If you're reading this magazine, chances are you're one of the millions who grew up in this halcyon period of animated TV and will no doubt find your favorite cartoon here, in some form or another. "There's every type of animation art imaginable, from character designs to layout drawings, to clean-ups to cels; there's also story packs, series bibles, model packs and, of course, toys," says Murray.

It wasn't easy for Murray and the team at MoCCA to assemble more than a 100 pieces from over 75 television shows. "We applied



for a few grants, but we ended up funding this show largely out-of-pocket and through private donations. Over time we've received a number of donations from galleries and collectors who believed in the cultural importance of a museum dedicated to comic and cartoon art. These connections have also helped us build a network, so that if we need a piece we can put the word out and see what comes down the pipeline. We also meet a fair number of creators at conventions and events who will loan or donate art to us."

Throughout the spacious gallery, you'll find plasma screens playing Saturday morning cartoons non-stop, some with dated commercials included. The lectures are scheduled to be led by historians and speakers from different aspects of the industry.

Finally, rest assured that you can bring your friends and family along who may not know a squash from a stretch. "Besides being an exhibit about cartoons we watch," Murray points out, "we're also looking to clue people in on the process of animation and guide them through that by using the artwork."

For a museum exhibit, it's bound to keep you coming back again, not unlike the cartoons you used to watch. Just don't forget your sugar cereal and footsie pajamas. ■

Jake Friedman is a New-York-based animator. For more info, visit www.jakefriedman.net.

Visit www.MoccaNY.org for a complete list of details.



Matt Murray

SPECIAL REPORT



On Her Majesty's Secret FX Mission

VFX supervisor Steve Begg spills the beans on the digital stunts of the new back-to-basics Bond thriller, *Casino Royale*. **by Ron Magid**

In the new James Bond feature, *Casino Royale*, which is based on Ian Fleming's first Agent 007 novel, the indestructible hero faces a far greater challenge than saving the world: convincing today's jaded audiences that Bond still does his own stunts.

"It's the re-invention of Bond," says visual effects supervisor Steve Begg—fresh off his brilliant model work on *Batman Begins*—who sees parallels between the two and even calls the newest 007 adventure *Bond Begins*. "It's on par with *Batman Begins*, which realistically portrayed how Batman came around, how the gadgets came around, etc. There's no fantastical stuff in this film at all—very little science fiction, no invisible cars—in fact, there's very few gadgets."

The James Bond series, the longest running in cinema

history at 20-plus installments, used to be the ultimate bastion of jaw-dropping, death-defying stunt work. But the computer graphics revolution that enabled the *Terminators* and *Jurassic Parks* had a deleterious effect on Her Majesty's Secret Service: audiences stopped believing all those spectacular feats were real. "I think the last few [films], in particular, had an air of unreality that contradicted the reality of

the stunts," Begg agrees.

Fortunately, practical special effects supervisor Chris Corbould, a veteran of several Bonds, pushed for Begg to join *Casino Royale*. "Before we worked together on the *Tomb Raider* films, Chris actually loathed miniatures and [effects]; after that, Chris came in to oversee the train crash sequence for *Batman Begins*, which had lots of physical effects, and he had such a ball that when the opportunity to get me involved on the Bond miniatures came up, he really pushed me. I ultimately ended up supervising the visual effects as well."

This development created a unique conundrum for Begg, who wrestled to insure that his 550-plus visual effects didn't overwhelm the stunts. "My approach was the stunt work is pretty much for real," Begg states. "Around 200 are proper stand-alone visual effects shots, whereas the rest are fix-its one way or another where we've had to remove rigs and wires for elaborate stunts."

So did Begg and his fx comrades at Peerless, Double Negative and CineSite succeed? "This is the most brutal James Bond ever," he promises.

Take the dynamic opening sequence, wherein Bond (Daniel Craig) chases a hyper-athletic bomber, Mollaka (Sebastien Foucan), who uses all sorts of stunts and jumps, leaps, twirls and somersaults to escape, eventually vaulting into a construction site where the chase continues atop giant cranes. "Bond's chasing this guy with a bomb in his backpack onto these 130-foot

cranes above this construction site, which is supposed to be on the coast of Madagascar but was actually in Nassau in the Bahamas," Begg explains. "There's some amazing stunt work, guys hurtling themselves from one crane to another with 150-foot drops below, clanging onto the crane when they land. We had safety wires on them just in case, so the bulk of our work in the sequence

Practical fx supervisor
Chris Corbould





In Plane Sight:

Although Daniel Craig did a lot of his own stunt work, some digital wizardry was necessary for a crucial collision sequence involving a futuristic aircraft and a tanker truck at what is supposed to be the bustling Miami airport.



great time on this film using some really ultra-low technology approaches back to back with high-tech shots.”

While Begg, Corbould and the art department teamed up to build and destroy an elaborate 25-foot model of a Venetian villa using gimbals and high-speed photography, the visual effects supervisor was not above using the cheapest, dirtiest means to create his shots. Take the major sequence where Bond pursues another villain across the bustling Miami airport, trying to prevent him from ramming a futuristic aircraft with a tanker truck. “We shot that in an old aerodrome in England,” Begg grins, “so we had to add a busy Miami airport environment with planes landing using a combination of 2D matte paintings and what have you. To make the background look busy, I shot a 12-inch off-the-shelf Airfix model airliner in camera against black. So in one hero shot, you see Daniel Craig running in the foreground and this 12-inch model landing in the background, and no one knows it’s a tiny little miniature with digital flashing lights and heat waves on the engines. I haven’t even told the director—he assumes it’s real.”

And so, no doubt, will audiences who still enjoy a good, action-packed spy thriller sans flashy digital trickery, which is the highest form of flattery for an effects artist who longed to work on James Bond films. “I wanted to do three or four things: to work with Ray Harryhausen, Doug Trumbull and/or Gerry Anderson,” says Begg, who worked with Anderson on *Terrahawks*, “but my longest yearnings were to work on a James Bond film. I’m not into fantasy films, I’m more into sci-fi hardware action stuff so when I was actually on a Bond film, I was equipped for it. I’d been psychologically programmed to think the James Bond way. When I got the break, man, it was like heaven: Occasionally frustrating, but a lot like heaven.” ■

Ron Magid is a Los Angeles-based journalist who specializes in visual effects.

Columbia/MGM’s *Casino Royale* opens in theaters nationwide on November 17.

was wire and rig removal. There were also a few greenscreen shots, purely for convenience, if they needed an extreme close-up of Daniel Craig or if we had very large drops underneath them, but I was impressed that Craig would leap 40 feet into an airbag over some girder work. He got a lot of bad press about how he wouldn’t do anything,

has an extensive background in digital effects (in fact, his first Bond job was creating fx animation to augment the model work of his mentor, Derek Meddings, on *GoldenEye*). “I’ve dabbled in matte painting, effects animation, stop motion, miniatures, high speed, pyrotechnics, etc.; so I’ve never locked onto one technique,” he says. “Even pre-digi-

“In one hero shot, you see Daniel Craig running in the foreground and this 12-inch model landing in the background, and no one knows it’s a tiny miniature with digital flashing lights and heat waves on the engines.”

—Steve Begg, *Casino Royale*’s vfx supervisor

but he really handled himself well with guns and fights, and he’s cool when he has to look suave with the ladies.”

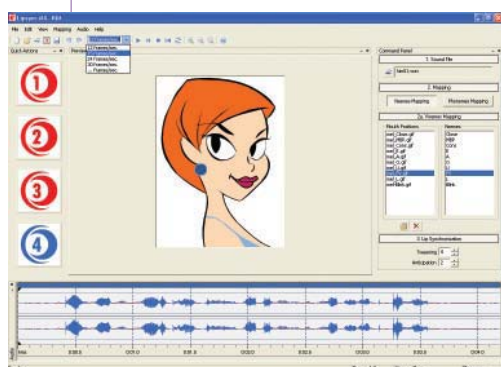
Begg, whose specialty is making miniatures look absolutely real, also

tal, I was always keen on using whatever worked, and today, I won’t go the 3D route when 2D will work just as well, maybe faster. I’m really a fan of mixing and matching tricks. In fact, I had a

Tech Reviews

Di-O-Matics' LipSync MX

Flash really has become ubiquitous in the world of web design and online animation. The vector-based nature of the shapes keeps the files small and optimized for broadband transmission. Even people who are still on dial-up (for reasons unbeknown to



me) can enjoy Flash-heavy sites.

In this Flash-friendly environment, a new kind of artist has emerged on the production side of things. They call themselves *Flash artists* and they are a hybrid of 2D animators, designers and, on occasion, 3D artists. Now, despite the myth that computers make our everyday lives easier, animation production still runs into the same bugaboos that it always has, one of which is lip sync.

Because you are reading this publication, I am going to take the broad leap of faith that you are familiar with animation and the animation process, and I'm going to skip over the formalities of explaining lip sync and its importance in the field. Suffice it to say that it is important and that anything to streamline the process is welcomed.

Enter LipSync MX (version 2), the latest cool tool from the good folks at Di-O-Matics—those crazy French Canadians from Quebec who brought you Morph-O-Matic, Cluster-O-Matic and the Hercules muscle system for

3ds Max. They have now attempted to automate the lip sync process in Flash with a fair amount of success.

With the new technology, you can have lip synced animation in four simple steps: You bring in your audio file as an MP3 or a WAV file (personally, I feel they should also include AIFF files). You designate your images of different mouth and face shapes. Play the audio file to check the animation. Then publish to Flash.

This may sound simplistic, but for the most part, it's really that easy. You see, the engine inside LipSync MX actually recognizes the phoneme sounds within the audio file—that's up to 40 unique phonemes. When you assign the images of the mouth shapes (Di-O-Maticites call these visemes) to the phonemes, LipSync makes an informed guess as to which picture should be used.

Amazing, you may say. But people, and, certainly, animated characters do not articulate every single phoneme. In fact, when they do, their mouths become a blur of flapping lips. Plus, making 40 unique phonemes would become a waste of time because most of them are not used. LipSync provides a base of nine phonemes to start with—which, presumably, will cover most of your lip sync needs. You can assign more visemes to phonemes if you need to. You can also adjust tweening and anticipation parameters to smooth out the animation if it feels too jerky.

Because LipSync MX is listening to specific sounds, it doesn't really matter what language you are syncing to. (Well, to an extent, that is.) There are some unique languages in the world that don't abide by the standard phonemes that most of us are used to. The automation process speeds up production significantly—but only as long as the artist can control it when it goes awry. Once the lip sync is published

by Todd
Sheridan
Perry



as an SWF file, the animation can be brought into Flash and the keyframes modified by hand. This may sound like a daunting task, but it will be more effective to have the foundation automatically animated and to tweak it, rather than building the animation entirely from scratch.

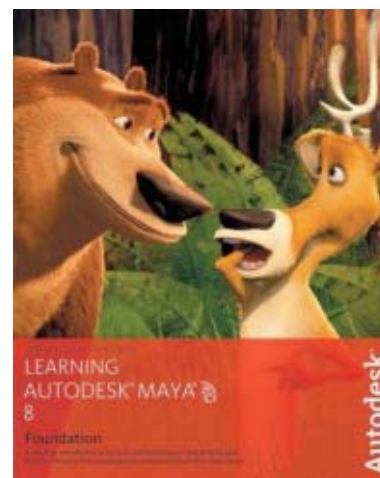
It's a quick and simple program to use—almost deceptively so. Yet, it provides a lot of bang for its buck. You can basically save your animators (or yourself) a lot of time for the cost of dinner and a movie ... with a date. So, postpone the movie and save your animators some time. Who knows? Maybe they'll take you out to a movie and dinner.

Web Site: www.lipsync-mx.com

Price: \$99 (30-day free trial)

Learning Autodesk Maya 8 Foundation

There is an abundance of books and magazines out there which tell you how to use animation and vfx-related software ... and I've read a lot of them. (Well, not, cover to cover, sitting awake at night, turning every page with anticipation—but, as good reference material!)



Since Autodesk acquired Maya earlier this year, the company has published a

library of books to help Maya artists and those who aspire to be one.

The manuals are available under the *Official Autodesk Training Guide* umbrella with three tiers of skill levels. The basic level is *Autodesk Maya Beginner's Guide*, which is geared toward newbies. The second is *Learning Autodesk Maya*, a level where you can kind of get around in the program but are learning the methodology. The highest level is called *Autodesk Maya Techniques*, geared toward the artists who are comfortable in Maya but want to know very specific techniques, like lighting, digital hair and toon rendering and shading. I'm going to focus on the *Foundation* volume of the *Learning Autodesk Maya* group, quite frankly, because that's what Autodesk sent me!

The format of the book is tied into *Open Season*, the recently released hit movie from Sony Pictures Animation. This provides the text with a foundation (project) that actually used Maya in production, and something that people can relate to. I like this approach because it gives the artist a sense that

he is creating a scene, step by step—and something that looks and feels like what has been created by the professionals. It is often hard to follow a tutorial that first has you model a screw. Then you texture a hot air balloon. Then you light a checkered ball on a tiled floor. The Autodesk manual builds on each previous chapter, so by the end, you have a scene. This is also a benefit because it emulates a real production pipeline. Granted, the artist-in-training is doing everything, where in a real pipeline, you have hundreds of people doing different, specific tasks. But this gives the artist a sampling of every stage, offering insight to make an informed decision on what stage he feels most comfortable with. Or perhaps he likes it all and becomes a digital auteur.

The book, as its title implies, is setting up the foundations for the Maya artist. So, you start with a primer on how to get around in Maya, but it isn't long into the first chapter that you are starting to build Boog the Bear's garage. Each new chapter furthers the development of the scene along with a new Maya

technique. Modeling, texturing, lighting, character modeling, rigging, animation, paint effects, particles, and even MEL scripting are touched on in a productive way that makes sense to the scene. However, you can't squeeze years of experience and development into one book, so this is meant to give the artist the idea of how it works. Beyond that, it's up to the artist to pursue the area that interests him most—picking up more specific manuals or tutorials or reading forums online.

I really enjoy the format and approach of the book, and if the others are set up in a similar fashion, I can't wait to read them. I would definitely suggest it to artists looking to learn about the ins and outs of Maya. However, I cannot stress enough that this will not teach you to be a good artist, it will only teach you how to use the tools well.

Web site: www.autodesk.com/store

Price: \$69.99 ■

Todd Sheridan Perry is the co-owner and vfx supervisor for Max Ink Cafe and Max Ink Productions. You can email him at ducky@maxinkcafe.com.

SECOND ANNUAL
SANTA CLARITA VALLEY
Film Festival
NOVEMBER 10-12, 2006

Come experience
independent film
in the beautiful
Santa Clarita Valley!

TICKETS
ON SALE
NOW!

For details, visit
www.sevfilmfestival.com
or call 661-251-0274.



VISUAL EFFECTS

Digital Domain's General Motors' TV spot



Cause & Effect

The Buzz on Flying Cars

by Barbara Robertson



VISUAL EFFECTS

The sky's the limit when it comes to the roads advertisers take to give autos a unique look in TV commercials. Even so, two recent ads soared above the rest and created something of a buzz in the U.S. and in Australia. In a spot for General Motors created at Digital Domain (Venice, Calif.), GM cars—and only GM cars—fly above the rush hour traffic in major U.S. cities. In a spot for CalTex created at Animal Logic (Sydney, Australia), a car made from a swarm of flies races beside a V8 Supercar.

Cars That Fly

What impressed Brad Parker, visual effects supervisor at Digital Domain, most about the *GM Elevation* spot was the tight schedule. "We had a whirlwind shoot—four cities in four days and then

back to Los Angeles," he says, "and then we had 11 days to complete the entire spot from delivery of plates."

Because they wanted to be in the middle of fast-moving traffic, location shots were tricky. "It was all run and gun," Parker says of the shoot with director Phil Joanou (*Gridiron Gang*, *U2: Rattle and Hum*) and cinematographer Max Malkin. "We drove down Fifth Avenue with a massive techno-crane off the back end. But we got beautiful plates."

Back at Digital Domain, co-vfx supervisor Jay Barton's crew created the GM cars—Cadillacs, Corvettes, Chevy trucks, Hummers and others. Some would fly; others would create tighter traffic jams.

Modelers, working primarily in Newtek's Lightwave and sometimes in 3ds Max, repurposed GM cars from previous commercials and created new digital

cars from scanned data and CAD data. For new models, the studio relied on tools and techniques previously developed to streamline the process.

To digitize and then model existing cars, Digital Domain used teams from 3D Recon, Acme and GTN. "We have them lay tape on the cars so that the tape lines up like the isoparms we use to model the car," says Parker. "That way, raw data is already configured in the way we're used to working."

When modelers received CAD data from the manufacturer, they first stripped out geometric detail that would be invisible. "Then, we lay a lower resolution chicken wire mesh over the top and shrink wrap it to the dense CAD data," says Parker. "We maintain the high frequency detail in our texture maps, so the data is in the render, but the models are quite light."

Animators flew the cars from camera views tracked by match movers using Digital Domain's proprietary Track software. CG supervisor Richard Morton worked with proprietary shaders to duplicate car paint and reflections on windshields.

"We know how car paint reacts to light," says Parker. "We're able to model the level of reflectance perfectly." For an aerial shot of fast-moving cars on the ground, the team gave compositors strips of rendered 3D cars.

The compositing team led by Dave Stern fit the cars into plates with Digital Domain's Nuke and tweaked the lighting. "Traditionally, what used to happen in rendering is now happening on the Nuke side," says Parker. "I think that's where 3D graphics are going—into real-time interactive lighting and compositing." And that can be especially important on tight deadlines.

"It was an insane schedule," Parker says. "But, we have special artists and a big bag of tricks for making cars look great quickly."

When Flies Make the Car

The spot begins with a shot of one fly. It wings its way onto a racetrack and splats into the grill of racecar champion Russell Ingall's V8 supercar. As he rounds a corner the camera looks back and we see a swarm of flies forming into a car. The fly car attacks Ingall's car as the two speed along the track until at the end, the fly car crashes into a barrier.

Animal Logic, the lead Australian shop behind the feature *Happy Feet*, created the buggy sports car using three different levels of flies: High, medium and low resolution. The high-res flies were fully textured. Medium-res flies were two spheres joined rough textures. Low-res flies were grayish blobs used for wide shots. "You believe they're flies due to the animation," says Ben Walsh art director, of the blobs. "The flight patterns and the unpredictability. Also because the director [Graeme Burfoot] started with a close-up of a real fly. When you add buzzing noise over a bunch of particles

moving unpredictably, it all makes sense."

The crew started with live-action footage of the real car onto which Burfoot sketched in the fly car. Then, animators replaced his sketches with a grayscale 3D car. Once the director approved that animation, the technical team added the bugs in mid-frame and wide shots, and animators key-framed flies for close-ups.

"When the flies initially form into the car, we had particle emitters coming out of the camera that we used when the flies were swarming, distorting and changing shape," Walsh says. "The emitters had a target in the shape of a car. When the car is driving along, though, we just attached particles to the geometry so they moved with the geometry." The attached particles were sometimes three or four layers deep on top of the car shell.

To help make the swarm convincing, animators swatted up to a hundred loose flies away from the swarm during many of the shots. "We tried to think about what these flies would really be doing, even though it sounds absurd to rationalize something totally unrealistic," says Walsh. "We thought sometimes the flies would get tired, or bump into something or get dizzy."

There were two especially tricky bits: Giving as many as 500,000 flies the correct amount of inertia so that when they went around corners, some would fly off, and having the fly car drive underneath the real car and reform itself on the other side.

They achieved the inertia effect largely through trial and error. "We had control over the weight," says Walsh, "and that affected the inertia."

Animal Logic's Caltex V8 Supercar spot



For the slide under the real car, they used target shapes as well as multiple passes, which they used on most shots. Indeed, on some shots compositors working with Autodesk's Flame system stitched together as many as 30 layers—passes for tightly grouped flies, loose flies, mid-ground flies, dust, lighting, beauty passes and so forth. "We also did a lot of depth of field in compositing," says Walsh. "Compositing brought everything together."

Although the 15-member team at Animal Logic had a bit more time for its fly car than did Digital Domain for its flying cars, the eight-week schedule felt tight. Hand animating up to 100 flies in some shots, herding thousands of particles into the shape of a fast-moving attack car was no small feat. But, at least they didn't need to make a penguin dance. ■

Barbara Robertson is an award-winning journalist who specializes in vfx and CG technologies. If you have a suggestion for her, you can email her at brobertson@animationmagazine.net.



Benjamin Walsh



Students working on a camerawork exercise.

Canvasing the Big Animated Screen

A New England Institute of Art class teaches the essentials of cinematography to animators. **by Ellen Wolff**

Back in 1998, when CG-animated films were still rare, an eye-catching credit appeared in Pixar's *A Bug's Life*. It read: cinematography by Sharon Calahan. Cinematography? In an animated film?

Fast forward to 2006 at The New England Institute of Art, where Jason Donati is teaching cinematography for animators. Donati, who chairs the Media Arts & Animation program at the Boston-area college, observes, "Cinematography has been around since the early days of motion pictures, but it's not taught in 3D animation courses. Yet good camera techniques are the same in both live-action and animation. Animators don't use booms and physical lights but they're

still making films. We need to build the bridge from cinematography to the virtual world."

While Donati has been developing these ideas during the two years he's been at the Art Institute, he traces the inspiration back to his own education—which included a BFA from U. Mass/Amherst and an MFA from the Rochester Institute of Technology. "I had to go to two different schools to get the knowledge I wanted. I learned the fine arts side for my undergraduate degree and then went to RIT for the technological side of animation."

It was while attending RIT that Donati started playing with cameras he borrowed from the school's film depart-

ment. "I saw those people taking interesting classes in lighting and cinematography. But animation students weren't getting any exposure to that at all, even though we were trying to create frames and then cut them together as shots and then sequences." As a result of his efforts, Donati's master's film earned him Rhythm & Hues' Digital Cinematography Scholarship Award.

Unless animators grasp the broadest possible perspective, Donati believes, "They're skating around being filmmakers. They need what I call a 'Three-Headed Monster' ap-

proach—to be an artist, a technologist and a filmmaker. Without those three, you're going to fail."

Donati acknowledges, "Animation students are introduced to 3D lighting, but usually from a narrow software/toolset perspective. They're taught how to access lighting tools in their particular software program, but not how and why certain lights should be used in certain situations. I believe students should have a solid understanding of how lights and cameras work in the real world before they attempt to create a lighting setup in a 3D environment."

While the juniors and seniors in Donati's digital cinematography class typically use Autodesk's Maya and 3ds Max software, he says his approach is software-agnostic. "It's more about theory and applying specific principles to the virtual world of animation," he notes. Most of Donati's students work in 3D, yet he asserts, "I don't dictate that. However 2D is more difficult because you have to really think about shadows and lighting. At least in 3D programs there's a camera icon. In 2D you have to know when you're doing camera moves ... or not."

OPPORTUNITIES

"Inconsistencies run rampant in 2D; shadows are different from shot to shot—or they're NOT changing with different views. But in both 3D and 2D, you have to consider where your virtual camera is."

To establish the broadest possible framework, Donati says, "We spend as much time looking at live-action photography as we do animated films. So my students learn to be aware of the camera. I screen *film noir* to show how lights and shadows define space. I can explain lighting from either a CG or live-action image, but I think that JUST looking at animation narrows their minds about what filmmaking is."

Donati gives his students cinematography exercises using cameras borrowed from the Art Institute's film department. A key assignment is to light and photograph the small, flexible mannequins used in drawing classes. The students film what is essentially a stop-motion animatic of the storyboards for their senior films. "I want them to understand what it means to physically do a camera push," he says.

But this curriculum has a longer-term objective, stretching beyond student films towards career preparation. "With ever increasing competition for animation jobs, it has become critical that digital cinematography skills start being developed at the college level." Donati recalls that during his 10 years working at the Boston-based studios Kaon and Animation Technologies, he found it really difficult to hire well-rounded animators in New England.

Not surprisingly, there's also interest in his approach from other Art Institutes nationwide. How others will implement digital cinematography classes will likely vary, depending upon whether a particular school has a traditional cinematography program with available camera equipment.

But one thing that everyone should have by next year is Donati's new book, *Digital Cinematography: An Animator's Guide*, which will be published by Thomson/Delmar. This text will include visual examples, exercises and software tips. It will address issues like rack focus, depth of field and using light as an 'active character'. "The book is about how to translate conventional techniques to work in 3D," Donati explains. "No textbook for this exists, so I had to write one!" ■

Ellen Wolff is a Los Angeles-based journalist who specializes in CG animation and education.

Drawn to Teaching: Jason Donati discusses qualities of lighting using clips from Will Vinton's *The PJs* series in his Animation Studio course.



NYU Master's in Digital Imaging and Design

Take your place at the forefront of digital imaging and animation. With artistic and creative insights from instructors at the top of the industry, you'll learn the critical process of managing the multi-faceted animation process in a team environment. Join a professional network that will open doors, whether it's Hollywood, an East Coast boutique, or any of the new, emerging opportunities in the field. Visit our website to view a gallery of student artwork.



Information Session:

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 6-8 p.m.

NYU Midtown Center, 10th Fl.

11 West 42nd Street
(between 5th and 6th Avenues)

Please call to RSVP.

www.scps.nyu.edu/422
1-888-998-7204, ext.422

That's why I go to NYU.

New York University is an affirmative action/equal opportunity institution. ©2006 New York University School of Continuing and Professional Studies

Executive Suite

Tips on Fine-Tooning Your Animation Job Hunt



by Rachelle Lewis

Like many of us in the industry, I've been through the droughts—periods where an overabundance of artists and technical folk were available (and oh how we wished we could utilize them!), but there simply weren't enough jobs to go around. Happily, this is not the case today. A whole lot of animation production is either happening right now, or slated to be starting up within the next eight to 12 months, and as far as talent acquisition goes, I'd say it's going to be a bit of a feeding frenzy for senior-level artists. In fact, it's already begun.

Animation is usually a cyclical industry. Looking at the history of hiring trends, it has either been feast or famine depending on production schedules and the state of the industry as a whole. With the recent success of big studio productions, as well as a number of successful projects that were produced on what the bigwigs might call a pop-sicle-stick budget, I would say we are looking at a very healthy talent recruiting scenario over the next 12 months, and possibly longer. (If I could predict the unfolding trend three years out, I would indeed be looking to purchase a large parcel of beachfront property in Fiji.)

Since senior artists (generally people who have two or more projects under their belts in their chosen area), are finite in number, this is a great time for mid-level and junior artists to get a shot at proving themselves in the industry. If you're an artist with limited or in some cases no production experience, but have the chops on your reel, you are hitting the job market at a very opportune time.

Because so many productions will be ramping up at approximately the same time, senior artists are already very much in demand and will



Some analysts have seen positive signs in the hiring climate thanks to the upswing in animation production for features such as Disney's *Meet the Robinsons*, DreamWorks' *Shrek the Third* and Sony's *Surf's Up*, all slated for 2007 releases.

have a lot of leverage in selecting the projects they choose to work on, basing their decisions not solely on salary, but on other factors like artistic faith in the project, or the opportunity for career expansion. Once the "senior" talent pool has been depleted, this opens the doors to mid-level and junior artists trying to get a foot in. Many facilities have anticipated this trend and have very wisely implemented training programs for junior artists, snatching up the most promising talent at animation schools. Some studios understand that they will not be able to

crew their entire production with seniors only. Many producers now realize that they will be setting up production with senior directors, supervisors and leads, and staffing much of their production with what would have been considered "too junior" for big studio productions just a few years ago.

It's obviously the great news for artists that animation is booming right now. If you are an artist trying to get in, DO YOUR RESEARCH. Know the studio you are submitting to. Remember, the bigger the studio, the more specialized the roles. One basic rule of thumb is to construct your reel according to the house and position(s) you are going after. In other words, if approaching a big studio for an animation position, only include animation on your reel, don't spend a lot of time showing off your lighting techniques. (You will not be doing animation AND lighting at a big house!) Smaller facilities sometimes look for artists who can wear numerous hats. If approaching a smaller studio it can sometimes be to your advantage to show a number of your talents on a reel (say modeling, lighting and texturing).

Clearly it's a great time to be an established artist working in the animation industry, and it's also a great time to break into the industry. The door has been opened a bit wider for up-

and-coming artists who have talent, drive and ambition. So for aspiring artists out there, use this time wisely! And, oh yes, remember that the studios are hiring YOU as a person, not just your skills. So word to the wise, drop the ego and just be you. Animation is a wonderfully collaborative art form. If you play well with others, listen, learn and shower daily, you can go far! ■

Rachelle Lewis has been a recruiter in animation and visual fx for over a decade. She owns an animation/fx staffing company, Rachelle Lewis Talent, in Los Angeles.

THE CENTER FOR DIGITAL IMAGING ARTS AT BOSTON UNIVERSITY

create YOUR WORLD

Certificate Programs

Digital Filmmaking	Visual Effects/Game Design
Photography	Graphic & Interactive Design
3D Animation	Recording Arts

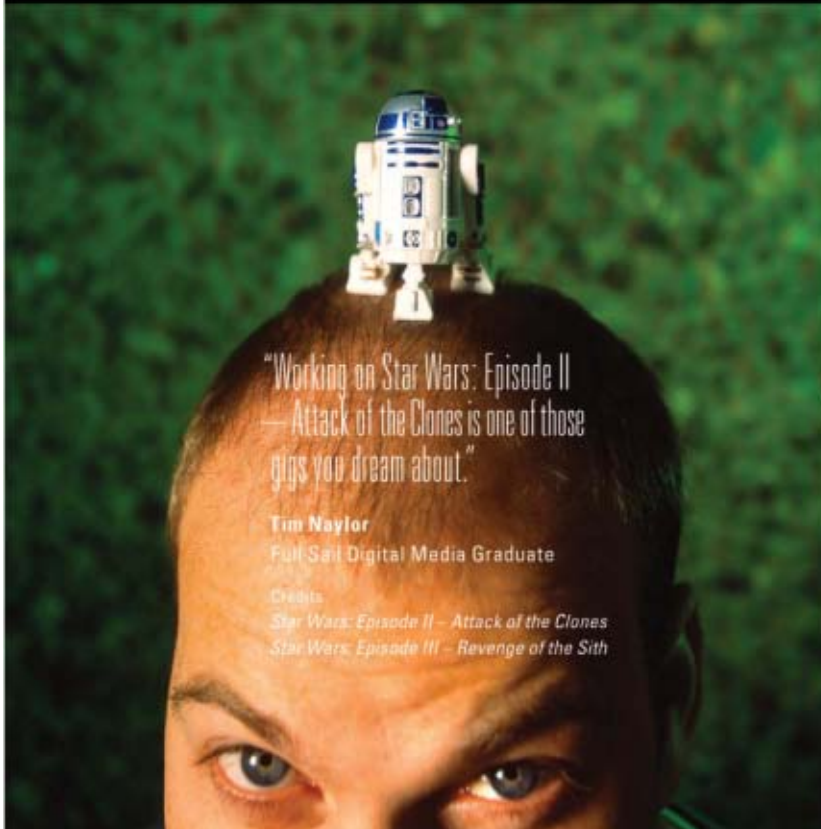
Intensive nine-month programs for the skills and tools you need to turn your ideas into reality. Financial assistance and career services available. **APPLY NOW.**

CONTACT US TODAY
800.808.2342 or www.cdiabu.com

cdia
BOSTON UNIVERSITY
The Center for Digital Imaging Arts at Boston University

WWW.CDIABU.COM

SCHOOL OF: COMPUTER ANIMATION > DIGITAL ARTS & DESIGN > ENTERTAINMENT BUSINESS > FILM > GAME DEVELOPMENT > RECORDING ARTS > SHOW PRODUCTION & TOURING



"Working on Star Wars: Episode II — Attack of the Clones is one of those gigs you dream about."

Tim Naylor
Full Sail Digital Media Graduate

Credits:
Star Wars: Episode II — Attack of the Clones
Star Wars: Episode III — Revenge of the Sith

FULL SAIL
Real World Education

SCHOOL OF COMPUTER ANIMATION

fullsail.com

800.226.7625

3300 University Boulevard Winter Park, FL 32792

Financial aid available to those who qualify.
Career development assistance.
Accredited College, ACCSCT.

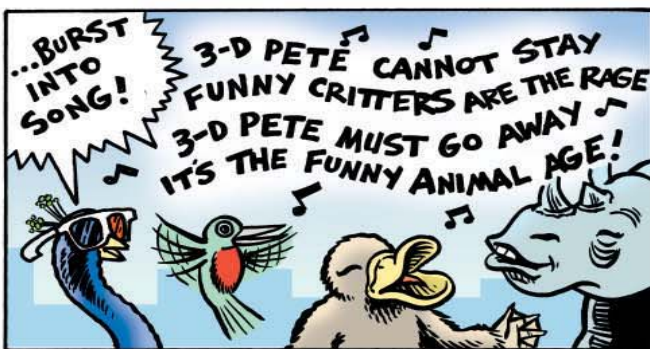
OPPORTUNITIES

funny animals!

WITH 3-D PETE! BY MIKE FISHER

BRACE YOURSELF!...

...IT'S A TERRIBLE TAIL!



OPPORTUNITIES

We cover the Business, Technology & Art of Animation!

Animation Magazine delivers information about companies, executives, trends, properties and projects from around the world.



Animation Magazine is now available in a digital format.

For more information on advertising or subscribing, go to www.animationmagazine.net or call 818-991-2884.

Simply nourishing creativity.



Animation in real time... real fast... real simple... real sharp!

No mouse. No computer. No hassles. Introducing the new LunchBox DV.

To engage elementary students, equipment must be simple. To motivate high school students, feedback must be instantaneous. To support college students, tools must be powerful. Professionals and schools worldwide know that the LunchBox DV is the standard for learning animation. No strings attached. Call or visit us on the web to find out more.



North America: 1.877.625.6438
Facsimile: 1.503.925.0221
Japan: MediaLink 81.471.86.1061
Korea: 70.7012.5059
Elsewhere: 1.503.625.6438

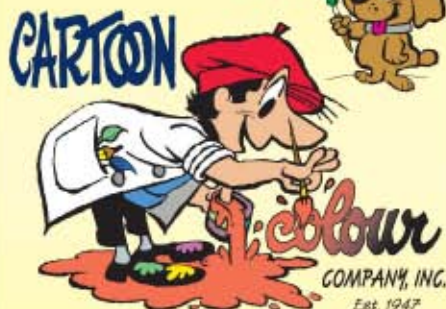
www.animationtoolworks.com

ANIMATION SUPPLIES

The Complete Source for All Your Animation Needs!

- Everything for the Professional & Amateur
- Wholesale Prices / Most Orders Shipped the Same Day

FAST, RELIABLE
WORLDWIDE
SERVICE



Featuring Our Own...

GEL-VINYL PAINTS

and Acrylic Animation Discs

LARGEST SELECTION OF ANIMATION BOND & ACETATE ANYWHERE!



©310/838-8467 • 800/523-3665 FAX 310/838-2531
9024 Lindblade Street, Culver City, CA 90232

www.cartooncolour.com



Lightfoot Ltd, Inc.

Animation Supplies at a Discount!

www.AnimationSupplies.com

School PO's Accepted
Teacher Workshops

PUNCHED ANIMATION PAPER \$9.95

- Lesson Plans
- Round Pegbars
- Acme Pegbars
- Hole Punches
- Lightboxes
- Software
- Pro Discs
- Pencils
- Animation Kits
- Starter Kits
- Header Strips
- Pencil Testers

951-693-5165

951-693-5166 fax

www.LightfootLtd.com

www.AnimationSupplies.com

*New Teacher Demo Stations



Animation Supplies at a Discount!

www.CartoonSupplies.com

INTERNATIONAL

RE-USEABLE HEADER STRIPS \$6.95

- Tombo Pencils
- Camera Stands
- Lightboxes
- Pencil Testers
- Books
- Specials
- Discs
- Software
- Comic Paper
- Anime Software
- Field Guides
- Hole Punches

951-693-5086

951-693-5087 fax

www.CartoonSupplies.com

www.AnimationSupplies.com

Owned by Lightfoot Ltd, Inc.

STUDENTS

FACULTY

Save on
Thousands
of Popular
Software
Titles!!

Save up to
85%

- Adobe
- AliasWavefront
- Autodesk
- Avid
- Corel
- Macromedia
- NewTek
- Softimage
- Much More!!



FREE CATALOG AVAILABLE!

www.JourneyEd.com

800-874-9001

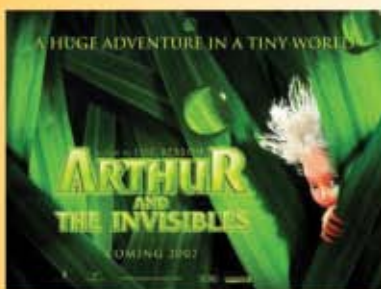
JourneyEd
Education Marketing

Offer for U.S. & Canadian qualified students & faculty only.
Proof of academic status required with order.

FESTIVALS

Event	Date	Place	Website
Bradford Animation Festival	Nov. 16-18	Bradford, U.K.	www.nmpft.org.uk/baf/2006
Waterloo Festival for Animated Cinema (WFAC)	Nov. 16-19	Ontario, Canada	www.wfac.ca
Northern Lights Film Festival	Nov. 16-23	Newcastle, U.K.	www.nlff.co.uk
2D Or Not 2D Animation Festival	Nov. 17-19	Everett, WA	www.2dornot2d.org
Philcon 2006	Nov. 17-19	Philadelphia, PA	www.philcon.org/2006
London Children's Film Festival	Nov. 18-26	London, U.K.	www.londonchildrenfilm.org.uk
ZINEBI Film Festival	Nov. 27-Dec. 2	Bilboa, Spain	www.zinebi.com
Asia Television Forum	Nov. 29-Dec. 1	Singapore	www.asiatvforum.com
Cairo International Film Festival	Nov. 28-Dec. 8	Cairo, Egypt	www.cairofilmfest.org
FirstGlance Hollywood Film Fest	Dec. 1-3	Los Angeles, CA	www.firstglancefilms.com
Festival Dei Popoli	Dec. 1-7	Florence, Italy	www.festivaldeipopoli.org
Anchorage International Film Festival	Dec. 1-10	Anchorage, Alaska	www.anchoragefilmfestival.com
Exposures: The UK Student Film Festival	Dec. 4-7	Manchester, U.K.	www.exposuresfilmfestival.co.uk
Les Nuits Magiques	Dec. 4-10	Begles, France	www.lesnuitsmagiques.fr
(IFCT) International Fest of Cinema and Technology	Dec. 5-6	Los Angeles, CA	www.ifct.org
Australian Effects and Animation Festival Awards	Dec. 5-7	Sydney, Australia	www.dmw.com.au
Courmayeur Noir in Festival	Dec. 5-11	Courmayeur, Italy	www.noirfest.com
Hollywood DV Festival	Dec. 6-10	Hollywood, CA	www.hollywooddvfestival.com
Santa Fe Film Festival	Dec. 6-10	Santa Fe, NM	www.santafefilmfestival.com

In the Next Issue of



★ **Special
20th Anniversary
Double Issue
Featuring Two Decades
of Animated People
& Projects**

★ **All About Luc Besson's
*Arthur & the Invisibles***

★ **Caught in the CG Magic of
*Charlotte's Web***


★ **Oscar Fever Hits Toon Town**

Advertisers in Alphabetical Order


Academy of Art University www.academyart.edu	33	JourneyEd.com www.journeyed.com	4
Animal Logic www.animallogic.com	13	Lightfoot www.lightfootltd.com	49
Animation Toolworks www.animationtoolworks.com	49	MPSC www.mpsc839.org/mpsc839	Inside Back Cover
Cartoon Colour www.cartooncolour.com	49	NATPE www.natpe.org	25
Cartoon Network Natalie.francis@timewarner.com	7	New York University www.scps.nyu.edu/x65	45
CartoonSupplies www.cartoonsupplies.com	49	Santa Clarita Valley Film Festival www.scvfilmfestival.com	41
Center for Digital Imaging Arts at Boston University www.digitalimagingarts.com	47	Sybex www.sybex.com	19
Classic Media www.classicmedia.tv	3	Van Arts www.vanarts.com	51
Cookie Jar Entertainment www.thecookiejarcompany.com	5	Wacom www.CintiqAnimate.com	15
EM.Entertainment www.em.tv	Inside Front Cover	Warner Bros www.warnervideo.com , www.dccomics.com	Back Cover
Full Sail www.fullsail.com	47		

Vancouver Institute of Media Arts

VANarts




Artwork by 3D Animation Student: Philipp Obermayer



Artwork by Game Art & Design Student: Gordon Moran

Bring Your Passion Live Your Dream




Celebrating 10 Years
of Excellence in Animation Training


VANarts welcomes Senior 3D Animation Advisors Andrew Gordon and Mike Venturini of **Pixar Animation Studios** to our faculty!

Intensive one-year Diploma Programs

- 2D/3D Animation
- Game Art and Design
- Visual Effects



www.vanarts.com
1-800-396-2787 info@vanarts.com
837 Beatty Street Vancouver, BC V6B 2M6



Bob Boyle may very well be the hardest-working man in TV animation this year. Either that, or he's finally cloned himself after years of diabolical experiments. Two of his excellent animated series—*Wow! Wow! Wubbzy!* and *Yin Yang Yo!*—are doing gangbusters on Nick Jr. and Jetix. Frankly, we'd even watch a toon based on his own colorful life!



5:30 a.m.—The sun rises in beautiful Pasadena, California. Yep, I'm a morning person!



5:35 a.m.—It's into the shower and right to work!



6 a.m.—I find inspiration for a *Yin Yang Yo!* story in my morning bowl of oatmeal.



6:15 a.m.—I immediately go to my home studio and call *Yin Yang Yo!* co-executive producer Steve Marmel. He carefully listens as I thoroughly explain my idea.



9 a.m.—My mind wanders a bit as I drive to work.



10 a.m.–12 p.m.—I give clear, well thought out direction to the talented *Wubbzy!* crew.



1 p.m.—I call *Wubbzy!* musician/composer Brad Mossman to walk him through a new set of very complex lyrics that I have written for one of our



2:30 p.m.—Into the recording studio to record our talented yet sometimes difficult cast.



5:30 p.m.—Stop by Disney to give some insightful direction to our stellar *Yin Yang Yo!* crew.



Late that night—I go home and my wife Teri washes away the remnants of another busy day.



Later that night—I go to bed filled with anticipation of the next days creative challenges!



Even Later—Sleep!

FIGHT *for* YOUR RIGHTS!

AUTHORIZATION I. A. T. S. E. & M. P. M. O.*

I, _____, (_____) _____
(Please print your name) (Your home telephone)

of _____
(Please print your home address, city, zip)

(Please print your job classification [animation, layout, etc.]) (Your Social Security number)

authorize IATSE & MPMO* to represent me in collective bargaining and to negotiate and conclude all agreements with my employer, _____,

regarding the terms and conditions of my employment. If the union obtains an agreement with my employer, I understand that I am free to negotiate more desirable terms on an individual basis. I understand that when the majority of employees authorize union representation, recognition from my employer may be obtained without an election.

X _____
(Please sign here) (Today's date)

Received by: _____

*International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees and Moving Machine Operators of the United States and Canada, AFL-CIO

WITH THIS!

ARE YOU SICK AND TIRED OF BEING ABUSED BY YOUR NON-UNION EMPLOYER? FED UP WITH WORKING OVERTIME WITHOUT PAY? THE MEANS TO SAVE YOUR CAREER IS ON THIS PAGE. FILL OUT THE ABOVE CARD AND MAIL IT TO: M.P.S.C. LOCAL 839, 4729 LANKERSHIM BLVD., NORTH HOLLYWOOD, CA 91602. IT'S YOUR FUTURE!

CHECK OUT OUR NEW WEBSITE AT <http://www.mpsc839.org/mpsc839>

THE ULTIMATE CRIMEFIGHTERS

**ON DVD
10.24.06**

warnervideo.com dccomics.com

BATMAN, JUSTICE LEAGUE, and all related characters and elements are trademarks of and © DC Comics. © 2006 Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. All Rights Reserved.